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# The Politics & Practice of Staff Development for British Academics

Muriel Sawbridge

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Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

Department of Adult & Continuing Education  
University of Durham  
1995



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## THE POLITICS & PRACTICE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR BRITISH ACADEMICS:

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THE POLITICS AND PRACTICE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR BRITISH  
ACADEMICS.

Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy 1995

ABSTRACT

The thesis is about the renewed interest in staff development for academic staff in Britain during the 1980s and 90s. Staff development is viewed here as a response to government inspired change agendas about the role of the education system in the political economy of British society. One of the key obstacles to this change agenda was identified from several influential sources as a culture of autonomy and collegiality centred on the pre-eminence of subject specialism. The change agenda is reflected in radical conservative government opinion about the need to challenge elitism, professional autonomy and lack of accountability. These arguments were powerfully reinforced by a concern with financial stringency within the university and state sector as a whole. Staff development is shown to reflect the ambiguities of being both an agent of change in higher education and part of the necessary development of professionalism among academics.

The changing nature of demand and supply for academic staff development within higher education is described and the wide variation in provision and the trends in some universities for mandatory participation noted. The national scene is related to research conducted in five universities in the North East of England. A case is made that pressures experienced by academics are increasing dramatically and there is a role for academic staff development fostered by employers, some of it mandatory, to assist staff in the performance of their various roles. Furthermore, this cannot be achieved unless those responsible for its development are supported at the highest levels within the institution. This support should it is argued, be focused on integrating development activity not reinforcing its separation.

The study attempts to relate macro changes in public policy to the micro changes which took place within particular institutions. The local study reveals national and international issues not only about staff development but in regard to the changing relationship between the state and higher education. It is argued that current staff development policies do not sufficiently take into account the complexity of universities as organisations and the contradictions and tensions in the way academic enquiry is fostered. This is particularly so where international reference groups may hold more sway than the institutional concerns of university managers. This is further reinforced by uncertainty about the future direction of change in the political economy in Britain and the difficulty therefore in defining the role of higher education in narrow parameters and managerial planning objectives. The study shows that staff development policies within higher education are a complex reflection of more profound structural changes in the ways in which universities relate to the societies and communities that support them.



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## ACRONYMS.

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AUT     | Association of University Teachers.                                      |
| CATS    | Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes.                                |
| CDP     | Committee of Directors of Polytechnics.                                  |
| CCTUT   | Co-Ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers.         |
| CETSW   | Council for Education and Training in Social Work                        |
| CNAA    | Council for National Academic Awards.                                    |
| CPD     | Continuing Professional Development.                                     |
| CVCP    | Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals.                            |
| DES     | Department of Education and Science.                                     |
| EHE     | Enterprise in Higher Education.  |
| FT      | Full time (in education).  |
| FTE     | Full time equivalent.  |
| HE      | Higher Education.  |
| HEFC    | Higher Education Funding Council.  |
| HEFCE   | Higher Education Funding Council for England.                            |
| HRM     | Human Resource Management.   |
| NAB     | National Advisory Board for Public Sector Further and Higher Education.  |
| NATFHE  | National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.        |
| NVQ     | National Vocational Qualifications.                                      |
| OU      | Open University.   |
| PCAS    | Polytechnics Central Applications Scheme.                                |
| PCFC    | Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council                                |
| RSA     | Royal Society of Arts.   |
| SCED    | Standing Committee on Educational Development.                           |
| SCEDSIP | Standing Conference of Educational Development Services in Polytechnics. |
| SEDA    | Staff and Educational Development Association.                           |
| SRHE    | Society for Research into Higher Education.                              |
| UCCA    | Universities Central Council on Admissions.                              |
| UCoSDA  | Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency.                      |
| UFC     | Universities Funding Council.  |
| UGC     | University Grants Committee.   |
| USDTU   | University Staff Development and Training Unit.                          |
| USDU    | University Staff Development Unit.                                       |

# CHAPTER 1

## CHALLENGING TRADITION.

"The major conclusions reached in this interim report are that, in spite of considerable effort and change in recent years, UK higher education is still not meeting the needs of the nation, either in scale or nature. Nor are we realising the full potential of our citizens. We must aim higher. Resistance to change within higher education arises from a fine tradition of academic democracy and an unyielding commitment to quality and excellence". p 31. Aim Higher - Widening Access to Higher Education. (RSA 1989).

In spite of the pessimism of this statement higher education in Britain in the last decade of the 20th Century is changing. Some see the changes as long overdue and to be greatly heralded, others as yet another fundamental threat to the established values and role of higher education in a society that has lost or is losing its way. One thing which is certain, is that Britain is not alone in revisiting the idea that the role of higher education be subject to scrutiny in terms of efficiency, cost effectiveness and functionality to the economy. This is not the place to explore the different interpretations that can be placed on such terms such as efficiency although throughout they will inform and be analysed in terms of definition and whose interests are being served in their use.

The main focus is how, in the arena of change, staff development is seen as a change agent and the degree to which in the mid 1990s it is an effective tool. In the process one is exploring the way history, tradition and institutional arrangements over time impact on the way change attempts are understood and acted upon. Fundamentally, it is based on the view that one of the

windows that can be used to "see" an organisation is through the definitions that its personnel employ to make sense of their world. One of the ways that this can be done which in important senses cuts across academic divisions such as subject, department or role, is via staff development policies, structures and processes. Certainly there is an increasingly powerful lobby which sees staff development as central to the change process in higher education, for example Robertson (1994) and Knight (1994). Before exploring the role of staff development in organisational change and the degree to which this is understood and accepted by those targeted for change it is necessary to explore the nature of the advocated change process and how it can be understood.

It is argued that the nature of the pressures for change in British higher education in the 1990s is as profound as that which led to and followed the Robbins Report in the 1960s. It is change which entails a fundamental shift in the role of higher education in society, legitimated in a claim that there is a distinct move from an elite to a mass system, one which enhances the "relevance to the economy" arguments and one increasingly under the control of government (Smith et al 1993). The ideas and practices that led to the Robbins Report and the consequent increased pace in the expansion of higher education in the three decades after the Second World War may in some senses bear similarity with current thinking about higher education. This is particularly so in seeking ways to increase participation rates but in total, are fundamentally different in form and content.

It is not simply about the earlier phase being mostly about expansion and the latter about reorganisation and in some areas of activity, contraction. It is more deeply rooted in challenges to the culture and power of universities in relation to the state. In short, arguing that what is needed is a fundamental shift in the culture which conditions the concept of the academic

career, the form and content of educational process and the way the higher education system relates to and is accountable to the economy.

Others argue that the timescale is even more dramatic and long ranging, in seeing current developments in higher education as a challenge to the consensus about core themes and values upon which the system has stood since enunciated by Plato in the 5th Century.BC. (Barnett 1990). Whatever the timescale, it is argued that " a remarkable change has occurred in higher education over the last three or four years, change that is international in scale. In most countries it is taken as axiomatic that quality and higher education went together. This is now challenged by people external to higher education institutions and there is demand for more accountability". (Harvey 1994). Others argue that many institutions are choosing to change and develop policies and practices that if widely adopted would revolutionise the organisation, the content and the power relationships, indeed the entire culture of higher education in Britain and to its benefit.(Robertson 1994).

This chapter traces the forms of change that are evident although it is necessary to signal up at this time, that one is not in anyway suggesting that all aspects of the change processes are experienced, understood and accepted by all the varying interests that comprise higher education today. British higher education is not a homogeneous mass. There is enormous variation in "the system" both in terms of its institutional arrangements and the premises upon which it based. The diversity is well articulated by Duke (1992) in pointing out that the Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish Universities, London University and the Open University display significant differences between each other and between the rest that operate in England.

These differences for example, are manifested in regional government relationships in regard to the first three, all with distinct historical and cultural traditions. London University seen as unique because of its size, internal diversity of provision, specialisation and range of missions, histories and cultural forms. The Open University, unique in its focus on distance learning and open ended structures, as are Oxford and Cambridge, unique for different reasons. In regard to Oxford and Cambridge, their uniqueness rests on their ancient and elevated status within the system and the bench mark they have traditionally set from which the rest of the system has paid homage. Duke (1992) therefore argues that "taking out Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, London, the Open University.....it is easier, if still superficial, to group the English universities : ancient; generally large nineteenth century civic; newer redbrick foundations often starting life as university colleges; the 1960s technological universities, formerly colleges of advanced technology; and the newer green-field or plate glass universities also of the 1960s." To which one must now add the polytechnics and colleges, since the removal of the binary divide in the early 1990s. Resulting in a highly complex range of institutional form, historical experience and functional orientation. Barnett (1990) may with some justification articulate some shared core values about the role and function of higher education in the pursuit of knowledge and truth but the way these are understood, prioritised and operationalised differs considerably.

In spite of this diversity, or maybe even fuelled by it, is the emergence since the late 1970s of a more sharply defined range of ideas and beliefs about problems in the economy. This has renewed interest by government about the role and function of academics and the degree to which they are seen as automatically productive and valuable members of society. Nor is this a product of one political party although the way it is currently defined and enacted is the product of the Conservative Government in power since 1979. As Becher and Kogan (1992)

argue, Treasury - led movements to curtail the cost of higher education were well in evidence from the early 1970s onwards with funding cuts in real terms of 10% and ending in 1974-75 the allocation of substantial capital funds. Further evidence can be seen in the process of charging overseas students a higher fee rate, a process started in 1967 which was used as a justification for further limits on public funding on the assumption that more could be recruited to make up the shortfall.

Furthermore, the discussion document produced in 1978 by the Labour government of the time, "Higher Education into the 1990s" indicated the need for tighter controls of higher education including the possibility of removing tenured posts and introducing compulsory redundancies. The important feature of these early "moves of government to reduce the financial commitment to higher education appear to have been less a result of specific higher education than a general Treasury - led movement to limit public expenditure." (Becher and Kogan (1992). By the late 1980s the agenda had clearly developed beyond that of concern for public expenditure, to one which included an analysis of the entire role and function of higher education in Britain.

This is not new, since the mid-19th century questions about the degree to which universities can and should contribute to the economic needs of the society have abounded and were influential in the latter part of that century for the formation of what are now defined as civic and redbrick universities. It is also the case that the expansion of higher education after the second world war was fuelled by ideas of an increasingly technological society that would require more of its population to be educated at higher levels. In fact the establishment of the polytechnics and colleges of higher education in the 1960s and 70s with differing control and accountability systems, was fuelled in part by a criticism of the degree to which existing

universities could and did contribute to workforce needs as articulated by industry and commerce. Another factor was seen as the ambivalence on the part of the Minister of Education, Anthony Crosland, in the degree to which he could bring himself to threaten the universities because he was seen as, "too much of an Oxford man" (Carswell 1985). In the view of Scott (1984) far from threatening the position of the universities, the formalisation of the binary divide in higher education, reinforced the role of the traditional university by allocating to the polytechnics and colleges the task of higher education reform.

It is however the case that until the late 1970s the internal workings of universities and their key role within higher education generally went relatively unchallenged. Even when academics were held in many aspects of popular literature and the media as trivial and self-seeking, their role in society at large was not seriously questioned in ways which threatened the prevailing professional autonomy. The 1980s however can be characterised as the time when there emerged distinct policies and practices specifically geared to the diminution of professional autonomy. Nor was this confined to the academic world. Wherever the public purse was involved, be it in medicine, the law, the civil service, local government or education, major attempts were set in train to change the culture, organisational arrangements and the function of professional groupings who had previously enjoyed considerable autonomy.

The key mechanism for change has clearly been an attempt at the introduction of market forces at all levels of operation including the introduction of the idea of the recipient of service functions defined as the customer. This latter idea has been manifested in a range of citizens' charter statements designed to increase the emphasis from supply to demand-driven occupations. The form and method of distribution of public expenditure and the conditions under which it would be allocated were the major methods used to bring this about. Added to

which was the battle for ideas couched in terms of systems, co-ordination, professional accountability, value for money, the efficacy of competition and market mechanisms and relevance to the needs of society and democracy.

To bring this about, significant attempts at organisational change have been introduced partly addressed to the way institutions relate to each other, are resourced and managed and in the employment circumstances of their staff. Examples across professional groups are too numerous to mention in any detail but there are marked similarities in the emergence of a new managerial culture in medicine and education including higher education, fuelled by budget-centre systems of organisation and the idea of competing providers with fiscal and other forms of encouragement to identify themselves as individual enterprises. All are geared as a challenge to what was and still appears to be seen by government as inefficient, unaccountable organisations staffed by self-serving professionals, lacking the efficiency pressures governing the market. It would be tempting to see these trends as purely the outpouring of political ideology, even of spleen as manifested by Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister at the time when much of this agenda was being defined. Certainly Young (1989) saw her as mounting a particularly vicious war with dominant intellectuals, not only in the older universities but also in the arts, the church, the civil service and within her own cabinet.

One member of the cabinet who was eventually to be unceremoniously sacked was Ian Gilmour who argued that "In 1985, the government called for Higher Education to serve the national economy more effectively - it presumably thought that slimmed down universities, like slimmed down manufacturing, were an effective aid to economic effectiveness and efficiency...the government sought to tilt the balance of higher education away from the humanities towards business and vocational studies...Mrs Thatcher deplored what she regarded

as the "anti industrial spirit" which academics shared with the clergy. "Nowhere is this attitude (opposition to wealth creation) more marked than in the cloister and the common room". Worse still, the universities were not only anti-industrial, they were positively left wing....perhaps worst of all, they lacked conviction; they entertained doubts." (Gilmour 1992)

It may well be the case that a particularly dominant and powerful leader who, if Gilmour is to be believed, holds strong anti-university views, can "start the ball rolling" and condition the form of discourse in which change is conducted. On the other hand it is important to note that according to Teichler (1988) advanced economies across the world were re-thinking the structure and form of their higher education systems. This took many forms. Attempts to upgrade some institutions, for example in France, the Netherlands and Australia; or focused on doubts about the efficacy of self-regulation as in Britain and America or calls for more diversification to cater for a more varied labour market in Italy and Japan. In fact, he argues that from the Second World War a surprisingly similar sequence of higher education policies has evolved in western industrial society.

He sees this development in 4 stages, the late 1950s to the 1960s, a time when there was a strong belief in the expansion of higher education as a means of stimulating the economy. This influenced the raising of the school leaving age. The late 1960s and early 1970s, were a time when advanced economies were searching for a modern structure for higher education. This was not simply seen as producing traditional graduates but seen as for diversification, the establishment of planning bodies and a greater emphasis on external representation. The 1970s, where the emphasis on workforce-planning increased, coupled with a growing concern with the idea of over-education and qualification. From the 1980s, higher education began to diversify but "from the very beginning structural debates were based on the claim that the

traditional university education ought not to be extended in accordance with the growing number of students"(Teichler 1988).

This was clearly a factor at a conference in Canada during 1985 on financing higher education and research during which Dr Wright president of the University of Waterloo told the conference delegates that students would have to bear more of the cost of their education because Canadian universities faced a desperate need for more money. Further contributors presented evidence that Canada's problems were similar to those experienced throughout the commonwealth; "governments everywhere were attempting to decrease funding commitments to universities in order to save money" (Tausig. THES, 1985). In New Zealand it was a Labour government which had forged the process similar to that in Britain. In fact it appears that it might even be more swinging in severity. "Treasury - speak has dominated government policies and the Labour government is introducing changes which are the envy of the Thatcher government. Indeed, Kenneth Baker visited New Zealand in recent months to obtain first hand information."(AUT Feb. 1990).

All of which lends weight to Harveys' (1994) argument that the springboard for change is the recurring crisis in capitalism which has led to a questioning of the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education and more particularly how it should be funded. We live in an increasingly international context and in the view of Scott (1984) if there is a crisis, it is of higher education in a liberal - democratic secular society and not merely of British universities under a Thatcherite administration. He sees this in terms of an evolutionary process from traditional through liberal and modern to a post-modern conception of higher education which has major implications for the way higher education is institutionalised within society. More profoundly he sees these trends as one in which higher learning is seen increasingly as a product rather

than a process, aided by the growth of the research function in which the concern for advances in knowledge predominate. This theme will be referred to later. For the purpose of this argument it is necessary explore a little more the impact on British higher education in the 1980s and 90s.

One cannot ignore the international perspectives and the macro-economic considerations referred to above. It can however be argued that Britain is undergoing profound changes that are in many respects unique. Not least of these is the degree to which Britain is any more a world power either in economic or political terms. It is not appropriate to explore these questions in any depth, simply to note that Britain's role in the global economy is increasingly ambiguous. It does seem to be the case that, in situations which seem to pose a challenge to the national identity, questions about the degree to which its institutions serve the political economy come more to the fore.

What is the nature of the challenge? Firstly, it is necessary to outline some of the key areas of change directed at universities during the 1980s and 90s. These fall within the following inter-related areas:-

fiscal measures including the impact on staffing structures and student support systems.

organisational change and performance assessment systems.

change addressed to structural, cultural and epistemological systems.

#### **Fiscal Policy - institutional funding.**

Changes in fiscal policy since the late 1970s can be seen in two phases, one continuing a trend of the 1970s, in seeking ways to reduce the cost of higher education and the other, focused on

increasing control systems about the way funding is spent. In the early 1980s the overall objective appeared to be to reduce public expenditure and between 1981 and 1984 as far as the universities was concerned this amounted to a reduction of funding in real terms somewhere between 11 and 15 percent although the extent of the cuts were markedly unequal in its distribution between institutions (Walford 1987). Furthermore it took the form of presenting to the University Grants Committee the choice of whether to reduce the number of students or to accept a reduction in the unit of resource.

The committee took the decision to reduce student numbers, planned to be 20,000 although in the event less than that. (Becher and Kogan 1992). The fact that this took place at a time of peak demand from school leavers and that the polytechnic sector was not subjected to the constraints imposed by the University Grants Committee enabled them to recruit many students denied a place in universities. This policy was later to run counter to the views that were expressed by the Royal Society (RSA 1989) which advocated an expansion of student numbers of 10% by 1995 and by 50% by the year 2,000.

Walford (1987) describes how in the early 1980s, "the universities reacted with extreme shock.....after suffering a gradual decline in finance for most of the 1970s....they expected to be left alone....and even those who advocated reductions in public expenditure felt that the universities had by then taken their fair share". Furthermore, the fact that universities were so dependent on direct central government finance emphasised the difference between them and the polytechnic and colleges sector of higher education where at that time the government did not have direct financial control.

Possibly of more significance to future fiscal policy is that the reductions were differentially allocated between universities as the government intended it should. On the other hand, the task facing the University Grants Committee in the implementation of policy highlighted the fact that in many important senses it was an unsuitable mechanism for the task (Becher and Kogan 1992), ( Walford 1987). Comprised mainly of academics with hard decisions to make about the relative worth of activities between institutions, with real implications for the closure of departments and the almost certain implication of staff redundancies, problems were inevitable. Add the servicing functions of civil servants responsible to the Secretary of State for Education and Science with a vested interest in the pursuit of government policy and one does not need a crystal ball to foresee the range of attack, particularly about competence and objectivity, which would arise.

The differential in "cuts" allocation is well illustrated by Walford (1987) in the examination of percentage reductions at extreme ends of the scale, noting that the average was 8.1% he quotes from the Times Higher Education Supplement that "the general picture that emerges is of a rather heterogeneous collection of universities receiving exceptional protection" these included Bath 2.1%, Cambridge 3.7%, Durham 4.4% and Oxford 3.1%. At the other extreme, experiencing the greatest level of reduction were, Salford 27.5%, Aston 18%, Keele 19.9%.". In effect, the funding reduction of Salford University was really of the order of 40%.

This set the scene for a more competitive relationship between institutions particularly as the polytechnic and college sector were not then being subjected to the same processes. The paradox being, that support and expansion was taking place in the public sector, whilst similar if not better provision was being closed down in the universities. The important lessons learnt by government, however, of a university sector which could be significantly influenced by

central government and a public sector, which was not so directly responsive may well have fuelled the long heralded abolition of the binary divide which was to come in the early 1990s. The fact that polytechnics and colleges were “owned” by local government and the avowed intent of the national government was to exercise greater control of local government finance was influential not only in its approach to schools and opting-out policy but also in regard to policy in the public sector of higher education.

The next key element of fiscal policy to the institutions, although including questions about total level of resource, lay more within a consideration of how the output of higher education could be related to the input of resource. At the heart of this policy lay two interrelated sets of ideas, the first - that higher education was not sufficiently accountable to the tests of efficiency perceived to be evident in enterprises subject to the market. Second - that the autonomy and perceived lack of accountability of academic institutions led to an output of students and research that were insufficiently tied to the workforce and economic needs of the society. Paradoxically the differential cuts allocation referred to above fell hardest on the technological universities because of the greater proportion of staff eligible for advantageous early retirement schemes. Some such as Keele, fell foul of criteria that penalised those institutions with a bias towards arts and social science.

The work of the University Grants Committee and how it changed throughout the decade is indicative of the process at work. Becher and Kogan (1992) see the response of the committee to the cuts in expenditure as crucial, from being an organisation with influence on how one would distribute a cake which was growing, to one of making distinctions between forms of reductions. This changed the character and ultimately the membership of the committee. By the mid 1980s the committee had become a "full blooded planning organisation, .....calling for

statements of overall objectives...detailing of research achievements and plans, forecasts of student numbers..financial forecasts to 1990...this type of request became normal and frequent". (Becher and Kogan 1992). Furthermore one of the mechanisms for research funding allocation was stated to be the ability of the institution to generate external funding.

By 1986 systems were in place where the ranking of institutions and departments within them were underway through what is now known as research selectivity. Paradoxically, far from challenging the culture of the traditional university, in the mid 1990s the practice of research selectivity as a means of grading and resourcing departments and institutions, has had the opposite effect. It has not only reinforced the research orientation of the "older" university but as will be demonstrated later, contributed to academic drift in the ex-polytechnics. The role of the UGC in these developments did not pass without comment and are probably best summarised by the Association of University Teachers in that "there is widespread concern that the UGC is no longer fulfilling its original role as a buffer between the universities and the Government. Over the past five years the UGC has shown itself to be ineffectual, ill-informed and biased; it no longer has the confidence of the academic community" (AUT 1994).

On the other hand one has to take into consideration that the committee was under intense pressure from a government with an increasingly hard line agenda about higher education policy. Indeed, its composition and role was already targeted and by 1987 the Croham Report urging an introduction " of commercial values and an injection of muscle from the wider world" (O'Connor 1987) signalled the end of academic dominance of the UGC. In future it was to be comprised of 50/50 academic and non academic representatives and to be renamed The Universities Funding Council. The committee called for co-ordination between the two wings of higher education a process which was formalised in the early 1990s as a result of the

abolition of the binary divide. In addition as far as fiscal policy is concerned, the Jarratt Committee Report (1985) led to the creation of budget-centres with the express purpose of making departments more accountable and cost-conscious.

One of the significant outcomes is in the staffing structure of universities and the terms and conditions under which they work. There have been progressive restrictions on academic staff salaries from the early 1980s, the effect being that by 1989 salaries of comparable reference groups had outstripped those of academic staff. (AUT 1989). More recent calculations indicate that the trend continues to the extent that "since 1979, the average non-manual salary has risen by 54% and the average salary of schoolteachers by 52%. The average salary of academic and related staff by only 9%. (AUT/NATFHE Summer 1993). Furthermore, that the effect of these restrictions on salaries coupled with increasing pressures on staff in terms of production, has led to a major crisis of staff morale. (AUT Autumn 1990).

It is also the case that the structure of staffing in universities both old and new is undergoing change, with distinct moves to more staff on fixed term contracts and an increasing use of part-time staff. (AUT Autumn 1990). More recently, according to the Association of University Teachers, by 1991 there had been a dramatic, increasing casualisation, of university staff coupled with a high labour turnover among younger staff, estimated as 20% of staff under the age of 30yrs . Added to which "over one third of all academic and academic related staff are now on temporary or part-time contracts" (AUT March 1991.)

Allied to these trends is the greying of the population of staff on permanent contracts. By 1991 32.2% of staff in the old universities and 26.95 in the new universities (ex - polytechnics and colleges) were aged over 50 yrs; it was predicted that within the following five years this

figure will have increased to 52.9% and 49% respectively. It is further argued that the general level of resource dramatically declined to the extent that in the six years from 1987, student numbers in terms of FTEs had increased by 50%, academic staff increased by only 10% and the unit of resource decreased by 20%. (AUT/NATFHE Summer 1993).

Of course it is possible to argue that this situation is highly functional to the change agenda. In the management of the funding crisis at the University of Aston, Walford (1987) provides a graphic illustration of how the reduction in the number of staff (50% of professors, nearly 50% of senior lecturers and readers, and over 50% of lecturers in the years 1980 to 1984) and the changing terms of conditions of staff, although presenting a short term managerial problem did facilitate the changes thought to be necessary for institutional survival. It also the case that one of the mechanisms contemplated by Davidson (1994) to bring about the necessary change to a "credit culture" is the opportunities presented by labour turnover.

Nor was fiscal policy confined to institutions and staff. The concern for costs and the belief in private enterprise, underpinned the policy of financial support for students. The decision to freeze maintenance grants at the 1989 level and the introduction of a loan scheme and progressive exclusion from welfare entitlements may ultimately be more of a challenge to the traditional concept of the university than any of the other measures outlined in this chapter. By making it more difficult for students to live away from home and for those with domestic responsibilities to undertake full time education, the tradition of a national intake and the full time undergraduate degree or postgraduate work becomes increasingly open to question.

The hardship of students was in evidence before the introduction of these measures but has increased dramatically. Hardship not only due to the declining value of the maintenance grant

estimated by the National Union of Students to have declined by 31 % in real terms since 1979 but by changes leading to disentanglement to social security benefits, lack of vacation employment due to the recession and the fact that some 60% of students whose parents were assessed for maintenance contributions do not receive financial support from parents. "By summer 1991, hardship had reached a crisis point with press reports of soup kitchens for destitute students". (AUT Bulletin No 188 March 1992).

So what can be deduced from the fiscal policies of the government towards the funding of higher education? Overall, the emphasis is on increasing central control mechanisms both nationally and within institutions, increasing competition between and within institutions; reducing the unit of resource and emphasising the income generation requirements of staff and departments; challenging national salary agreements with the introduction of elements of performance related pay and using fiscal policy to influence the epistemological base of higher education towards that seen to be of direct relevance to the economy. This is reflected in the establishment of committees focused on change. In the public sector the Lindop Committee established in 1984 to examine standards, validation processes, costs and mechanisms for distinguishing between institutions. For "older" universities the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals had in 1983 set up the Reynolds Committee to examine the maintenance and improvement of academic standards including the internal systems for assessing courses and research and in 1984 the Jarratt Committee to examine university efficiency and management systems. Both of these latter moves were taken by the CVCP to forestall the setting up of committees by government less sympathetic to higher education and to retain as much control over the evaluation processes as possible.

The overall thrust of the fiscal policies of government in regard to higher education in the 1980s and 90s can be summarised as the four "Cs"

**Centralisation** both in terms of central government control and institutional managerialism.

**Competition** within and between institutions.

**Casualisation** by increasing the trend to contract staffing as a means of establishing staffing flexibility and control.

**Customerization** by defining students, employers and government as customers who will purchase service if the product and the price is right..

### **Organisational Change and Performance Assessment.**

In order for the outcomes referred to above to be realised in day to day practice one of the key targets of the change agenda was the internal workings of higher education institutions and to change the nature of the relationship within and between them. These policies can be located in a number of assumptions not least, that higher education in general but the universities in particular were operating a form of educational cartel, setting their own agendas and criterion for success, without regard to the interests of those responsible for the allocation of public monies. This situation was seen as fostered by the absence of the kind of thinking that government believed characterises and is so productive to the functioning of private enterprise in a capitalist economy because higher education was seen as divorced from the kind of accountability processes and efficiency criteria that market mechanisms require.

Furthermore, as Gilmour (1992) points out, many of the challenges to monetarism as the guiding economic theory of the 1980s came from university academics although the economic theories upon which it rests is espoused by a number of academic economists. What is more the University of Oxford in 1985 denied the customary award of an honorary degree to the Prime Minister, which Gilmour describes thus "this unprecedented rebuff was fully understandable, but profoundly unwise if Oxford hoped for a less hostile government attitude to the universities".(Gilmour 1992).

It is evident however that the government of the time regarded polytechnics as more efficient and relevant to the requirements of the economy and that their historical development had produced a system more amenable to an enterprise culture. The only problem was that they were under the control of another set of less favoured institutions, the Local Authorities. Consequently two major wings of policy can be detected, firstly one to impose, as much as possible, efficiency and accountability criteria on the universities of the time, in theory, with enterprises in the private sector. Secondly, in the early 1990s to remove the binary divide in higher education by redefining the public sector of higher education as universities.

In 1988 as a result of the Education Reform Act the rule of local authorities over the funding of public sector higher education was broken by the establishment of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and at the same time the University Grants Committee reformed into the Universities Funding Council; both committees amalgamated in the early 1990s at the end of the binary divide. The whole process described by Gilmour (1992) possibly a little extravagantly but no less pithily as "while they were privatising water and gas, the Thatcherites were nationalising higher education". The important feature of these changes however, in addition to confirming the control of central government over funding, was the orientation of

the two funding councils. Both were constituted to increase industrial representation, both were committed to some form of contract funding and both set up a new funding regime and initiated a new planning process ( Becher and Kogan 1992).

The Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals, concerned by the idea that universities were thought to be inefficient and poorly managed and anticipating government action which might have been less favourable to universities, ensured that by setting up their own committee to examine efficiency issues in Universities were then left to implement the findings of the Jarratt Committee Report (1985). This reinforced the trend that had already begun to emerge as a result of the funding policies of the early 1980s to a new form of managerialism in universities. The major features were "Councils should assert themselves over Senates, which represent too often the conservative status quo, and draw up strategic plans. Lay members, preferably young thrusters from industry and commerce, should be given more influence. The vice-chancellor must be recognised as chief executive and deans and heads of department should be seen as top down line - managers rather than bottom up representatives or even academic *primi inter pares* (i.e. they should be appointed not elected). Both staff and departments should be subject to periodic review, and universities should make much more use of performance indicators (employability of graduates, "A" level scores of applicants, research support, publication records, Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all)." (THES 5th.April 1985).

As the writer of the above editorial points out, although the proposed development model seems to be that of industry, it is in fact much closer to that which operated in the polytechnics. Although many could argue that what was proposed by the Jarratt Committee Report (1985) makes good common sense particularly in regard to arguing for university decision-making which is more systematic and more widely accountable, the proposals were not based on any

adequate cost-benefit analysis between the managerial systems of the two wings of the binary divide nor the limitations of industrial management systems. As Martin (THES 19th. April 1995) points out there are many models of industrial management and "private industry in countries which have achieved much greater economic success than the UK do not operate to the Jarratt model - notably Japan, but also elsewhere. Decision-making in Japanese industry is often slow, and it involves wide consultation - it is not a matter of making "hard" decisions at the top and enforcing them upon subordinates". In addition there appears to be a blind faith that academics have the expertise and the inclination to adopt this new role and can do so in ways that are objective in terms of the needs of the total institution without reference to narrow sectional interests whether based on subject or departmental concerns. On the other hand, by placing emphasis on corporate concerns over that of subject or department this could be seen as the most significant aspect of the report in challenging the structure, form and value base of higher education as manifested by universities. Furthermore, change is also seen as urgent and the Committee proposed a twelve-month implementation period.

In fact in some senses the Jarratt Committee although utilising ideas from industry and the polytechnics, also seem to have been exercised by more subtle manifestations of traditional university culture. This is evident in the apparent belief that academics had the ability to perform these new roles, not unlike ideas that subject expertise somehow confers the ability for its dissemination in the teaching of students. Although one of the recommendations argued for the introduction of arrangements for staff development, appraisal and accountability systems, the timescale and the lack of priority given to the development needs of senior staff, indicates that this was little more than a token gesture. Furthermore, it is clear that the Committee saw that academics must ultimately be in control, the role of the university administrators seen as that of service expert - "on tap rather than on top" (THES April 1985). Interestingly, the

emphasis on shifting decision making from bottom up to top down systems was not reflected in the corresponding document "Management for a Purpose" (NAB 1987) in regard to polytechnics and colleges issued two years after the Jarratt Report. In fact the National Advisory Board for Local Authority Higher Education report envisaged a much more participatory framework because it was argued, " people work best if they are not only committed to what they are doing but also have control over the resources and activities involved".(NAB 1987).

It also the case that the degree to which the Jarratt proposals have been implemented is somewhat open to doubt, the research conducted for this paper which will be explored in some depth later, indicates that departments are still very powerful, that corporate identification is patchy and that the response to the call for regular staff appraisals is patchy and extremely variable in quality. It is pointed out by Becher and Kogan (1992) that "despite some strongly coercive measures subsequently adopted by the central authorities (and notably the UGC itself) to ensure that universities should implement the Jarratt proposals in full, the evidence that they have done so remains patchy and open to debate. ...some vice - chancellors alongside some polytechnic directors and college principals...have...taken to themselves decision-making powers in excess of those normally accorded to those working professionally...there still appear to be many who, despite a prudent level of lip - service to the simplistic rationalism of the Jarratt doctrines, have managed to maintain a more traditional balance between central and individual initiatives in the framing of purposes and the allocation of tasks."

The Jarratt Report however marks the coalescence of thinking on a number of proposed organisational changes which can be traced back to the expansion of existing and the creation of larger institutions following the Robbins Report (1963). This had the effect of turning

universities "into large and complex bureaucracies which had to be managed with professional sophistication" (THES 5th April 1985) but which later found favour in the narrow instrumentalism of the 1980s government. It introduced concepts rooted in market oriented theory centred on managerialism and corporate identity which if not always challenging the practice certainly challenged the self image of universities as a collectivity of scholars. Barnett (1990) argues that it provoked two issues " the nature of objectives setting, and second the ownership of the institution and its management". These issues will be explored later in considering how one can understand universities as organisations.

In addition to the pressure to adopt more market and hierarchically oriented management styles as a response to Jarratt and the removal of the binary divide in the early 1990s with the concomitant changes to funding committees, student application systems were standardised across the higher education network with the establishment of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service replacing previous bodies (UCCA/PCAS) geared separately to admissions in the universities and polytechnics as they were at the time. Other systems, geared to the advocated managerialist culture were focused on notions of selectivity and quality assurance. This is not the time to discuss the problematic of selectivity and quality assessment, simply to note as a response to serious concerns about evaluation and accountability which it is argued have emerged throughout the 1970s and 80s (Roizen and Jepson 1985), performance indicators were defined by the University Grants Committee and the polytechnic equivalent and further developed by their successors.

As Becher and Kogan (1992) point out "two changes can be noted. First, the link between the allocation of resources and evaluation became stronger and more explicit.....Second, changes in the locus of allocative power towards central authorities accompanied by changes in control

over the modes and amount of evaluation. This control shifted decisively from being the preserve of academic and professional peer groups towards a function of system and institutional management". The relationship between these different forms of external assessment and the funding of courses and research is not yet clear. It has led to some grading of research and departments in terms of definitions of excellence and to debates about the concept of teaching as distinct from teaching and research universities; the former being of lower status and subject to different funding criteria. The main criticisms of this process have been centred on the amount of extra work it has placed on already over worked staff. "Six tons of paper a year and £250,000 worth of photocopying is the most obvious sign of a huge growth industry in universities; quality assessment." (MacLeod D. 1994).

Opinion is divided about these changes, even those critical of what is seen as a narrow utilitarianism in the changes of over the last decade would not defend higher education as it was. Writing in 1986 Williamson, whilst describing the Green Paper, Higher Education into the 1990s as a "mean, expedient and unimaginative little document" also argues that "the system of higher education is not one that can be easily defended. It is still elitist and enrolls a much lower percentage of the relevant age group ...it has denied educational opportunity to people from a working class background, women and to people from ethnic minorities". (Williamson 1986). Others (for example Robertson 1994, Knight 1994) appear less worried about the utilitarianism and see it as a means of liberating higher education from the constraints of subject specialism and the full - time degree model, thereby securing a wider constituency for a higher education system that is accessible and flexible to the needs of a much wider population.

For some (Reeves 1988), (Barnett 1990), (Scott 1984), (Warnock 1988), who would not defend the elitism of British higher education, are profoundly worried about the centralisation

of higher education policy, its concern with immediate workforce spin offs and the feared loss of what is distinctive and valuable about higher education. The threat of structural discrimination between institutions has helped to fuel these fears. Proposals emanating from a UGC report in 1987 on the future of earth sciences reinforced worries that the drift of government policy would lead to a league table of universities, some of whom would concentrate on differing levels of teaching and others who would be supported to do research. An example of this kind of thinking is presented below which in the opinion of Judd (1987) would result in a plan which would lead to an elite sector of research and higher level teaching institutions with the rest little more than training factories.

| <b>THE WINNERS - BUT IT'S ALL A QUESTION OF WHICH LEAGUE</b> |   |   |   |  |   |    |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|----|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |    |
|  | <b>The Research Council Grants Cup</b>  | <b>Local Authority Research Grants Shield</b>                                       | <b>The Industry &amp; Commerce Grants Cup</b>                                       | <b>The Research Productivity Shield</b>  | <b>Percentage of Income from Industry Cup</b>   |    |
| 1  | LONDON  | LONDON  | LONDON  | LONDON BUS.SCH   | SALFORD   | 1  |
| 2  | OXFORD  | BATH  | UMIST   | U.WALES COL.MED  | HERIOT-WATT   | 2  |
| 3  | CAMBRIDGE   | MANCHESTER  | SOUTHAMPTON   | ABERYSTWYTH  | LOUGHBOROUGH  | 3  |
| 4  | GLASGOW   | LEEDS   | CAMBRIDGE   | LONDON   | BIRMINGHAM  | 4  |
| 5  | EDINBURGH   | NEWCASTLE   | SALFORD   | OXFORD   | SURREY  | 5  |
| 6  | MANCHESTER  | BIRMINGHAM  | BIRMINGHAM  | UMIST  | CITY  | 6  |
| 7  | BRISTOL   | BANGOR  | EDINBURGH   | HERIOT-WATT  | BRUNEL  | 7  |
| 8  | ABERYSTWYTH   | GLASGOW   | LEEDS   | BRUNEL   | ESSEX   | 8  |
| 9  | NOTTINGHAM  | EXETER  | LOUGHBOROUGH  | SOUTHAMPTON  | BRADFORD  | 9  |
| 10   | LIVERPOOL   | STRATHCLYDE   | NOTTINGHAM  | CAMBRIDGE  | STRATHCLYDE   | 10 |
| 11   | SOUTHAMPTON   | BRISTOL   | SURREY  | SURREY   | READING   | 11 |
| 12   | NEWCASTLE   | BRADFORD  | GLASGOW   | DUNDEE   | ASTON   | 12 |
| 13   | SHEFFIELD   | LIVERPOOL   | OXFORD  | LOUGHBOROUGH   | STIRLING  | 13 |
| 14   | LEEDS   | BRUNEL  | STRATHCLYDE   | SALFORD  | LEICESTER   | 14 |
| 15   |   | SALFORD   | WARWICK   | GLASGOW  | DURHAM  | 15 |

Supporters of these views see it as a crisis of identity in higher education, a crisis that is viewed as an attack on the whole idea of what higher education should represent in modern society. "The universities do not exist solely to train managers or employees. They are not in business merely to supply statistical or other research backing for government policies. To say that our purposes are higher sounds pretentious and self-important. The present predicament of the universities is that no one appears to believe in their higher purposes except themselves." (Warnock 1988).

Embodied in this crisis theory is the idea that objective knowledge is under attack and the autonomy of higher education coupled with it standing for intrinsically worthwhile ends is in question. Warnock wrote from a traditional university perspective, in the year when the designation of "university" was applied to polytechnics and colleges, who had always had to operate in a different educational arena. It is not surprising therefore that one of the challenges which could lend some support to crisis theorists lies in the proposals stemming mainly from within the ex-polytechnic sector. Here the way the traditional university has controlled the knowledge industry is defined as the crisis, directed to the teaching and learning functions of the university and in particular the dependence on the full time, three-year degree model. It is argued from this perspective, that there is need to shift from a course-based culture to what is defined as a credit culture; one which has major ramifications for the way higher education is structured and functions. (Robertson 1994).

The latest twist in these arguments is fuelled by questions ranging from mechanisms for funding mass education via part-time study which is not time-limited, to more fundamental concerns about the structure of knowledge and how it is institutionalised. The paradox at the heart of these moves is that they can be functional to radicals of the left or the right. To those

of the left in challenging the "closed shop" of the academic specialism, gatekeeping mechanisms which restrict access and the departmental empires that inhibit cross-fertilisation. To the right, particularly those who view academic freedom as a licence to be detached from the day to day workings of the economy and the politics of society.

### **Change Addressed to Structural, Cultural and Epistemological Systems.**

The report produced for the Higher Education Quality Council in 1994 by David Robertson titled "Choosing to Change - extending access, choice and mobility in higher education" embodies much of the thinking adopted by those who support a radical restructuring of curriculum form and institutional arrangements. The study on which the report is based was funded by the Department of Education and Science, the former Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) and the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC). In addition one can see the interests of the Royal Society and their advocacy throughout the 1980s and 90s of education for capability and those of the Confederation of British Industry interested in the production of graduates with high employability. It is not surprising therefore that the genesis of the report should stem from within public sector higher education as it was then.

The primary focus of the report is on the efficacy in terms of access and achievement of credit accumulation and transfer systems (CATS) and the necessary institutional arrangements for it to be part of a national and widely accessible system of higher education. Arguing for the extension of CAT systems, with the necessary modularisation and relative freedom from time limited study there is a need for the creation of a "credit culture" on the grounds of democratic access, empowerment of students, accountability to the workforce requirements of society and

efficient use of a wide range of interconnecting networks of learning. Robertson advocates four shifts of emphasis which have "important consequences for cultural and professional life"; these are "a shift from courses to credit systems; from departments to frameworks; from subject based teaching to student centred learning; and from knowledge to performance". It is argued that this requires a transformation which is fundamental and which will alter the balance of familiar relationships between institutions, students, employers and the State. "The needs of students and employers as consumers, will become more important in the future, and institutions (and the State) as suppliers of services, will need to become more responsive", "this requires more than a rearrangement of the furniture of institutional life, the careless restructuring of functions and roles in a manner disconnected from a common vision or purposeful educational direction...strategic change and cultural change is related to institutional mission".(Robertson 1994)

This will, he argues mean fundamental shifts in institutional culture principally focusing on taxonomies of knowledge, the rewriting of the undergraduate curriculum, greater involvement of what are defined as para-academics, better use of administrative staff and finally the reconstruction of the institution away from one defined as a "loose congeries of quasi-autonomous academic units" to one with a much greater sense of corporate identity and at the same time the erosion of traditional forms of demarcation between higher and other forms of post secondary education.

Robertson recognises that there will be several responses from the academic community to such proposals - the enthusiasts, the pragmatists, the sceptics and the antagonists. Even amongst those who accept the idea of CATS as one of the key if not the only system of organising learning he predicts a number of different responses. The single course or family of

courses within a single department - offer nothing that is offensive to traditional academic values, "nor do they undermine conventional loyalty to subject, to the department...". An institutional scheme such as a multi, faculty modular course is more radical in that the more comprehensive credit systems become, the more they erode the integrity of disciplines and require institution-wide restructuring. Finally, a third level is a national framework, an even sharper threat to traditional academic values.

The degree to which these proposals are a fundamental challenge to the way higher education is organised and what are the likely push and pull factors in regard to organisational change, will be considered later and are informed by the research into aspects of staff development which have been undertaken for this work. Suffice at the moment, that many of the proposals contained in the above report can be seen as compatible with dominant government thinking throughout the last decade and a half. They also systematise many of the preoccupations of such bodies as the Royal Society in making higher education more responsive to the supposed needs of employers, in advocating the widening access to a range of higher educational experiences and in seeing the current culture of higher education as a barrier to change. (RSA 1989).

In the relevance to the economy arguments they can be seen to have a certain compatibility with the National Vocational Qualification Scheme applying to much of further education. They also meet some of the interests of those who dislike the elitism of substantial parts of the higher education system and see the introduction of a credit culture as a means of enabling the participation of the part-time student, of those with domestic and other responsibilities which limit their availability for time-limited learning, as well as challenging some of the departmental and subject-based practices which serve to limit access to learning. On the other hand one

must not lose sight of the control agenda which underpins much of this thinking, not only in regard to fiscal matters but also in regard to intellectual challenge. This poses questions about whether higher education is a national or international activity, how far its function is or should be focused on economic considerations, how it relates to power elites within any society and the degree to which it is responsive to democratic forces.

The contribution of Gibbons and colleagues (1994) is of a different order - less tied to consideration of degree structures and the manipulation of institutional form, yet at the same time mirroring the views of Robertson in seeing current arrangements for learning and research as inadequate to meet the pressures of modern society. There are two major strands to the work of Gibbons et al (1994) one being about what constitutes knowledge, the other being the form, content and institutional arrangements for learning and research. Both are based on the rapid growth of mass higher education in all industrialised countries since the second world war - a process they describe as massification and one which they see as increasingly significant in what is defined as the emergence of knowledge based societies.

As far as knowledge is concerned they argue that "it has become diffuse , opaque , incoherent and centrifugal ..this has taken three forms..a ceaseless subdivision of knowledge of greater scientific sophistication.....(which) tend to be volatile and parochial, both qualities which undermine the idea of a broader and coherent intellectual culture. The second...wider definitions of knowledge...partly because of the erosion of older ideas of academic respectability, partly because of the impact of new technologies." (Gibbons et al. 1994). The third element is seen as the impact of the deliberately decentred diversity and incoherence associated with post-modernism. "All three have had the common effect of making it almost impossible to talk sensibly about the wholeness of knowledge. Science no longer has a single

strand, no shared method, no common preoccupations, no values which all its various branches share".(Gibbons et al 1994)

This leads them to the view that the search for knowledge is less predictable, is and will be pursued in various institutional forms and with a multiplicity of alliances of which formalised higher education may only and not inevitably be a part. The same rings true as far as they are concerned for educational process which will be subject to constant change, diversity of form and source from a variety of institutional arrangements. The key element is that the knowledge industry is no longer confined to higher education and will and is being accessed from a variety of sources. This inevitably forces links with a variety of providers be they employers, government, training and/ or research organisations or educational institutions. It is difficult to see how the "Byzantine world of academia" and the various tribal arrangements described by Becher (1989) will cope with challenge of this order.

Change agendas of this magnitude, which Gibbons et al (1994) argue is well on the way, pose questions not only about organisational management but possibly of more fundamental interest, within academic subject communities. It is not only confined to the day to day workings of the academic career but a challenge to professional identity. Those inheriting the new managerial mantle in higher education see that a major part of the mechanism is to improve decision making processes by somehow changing the culture which currently operates and by limiting the democratic nature of decision making.

The development of corporate systems and strategies will, according to a report produced by Touche Ross Management Consultants in conjunction with the Conference of University Administrators and the Association of Polytechnic Administrators, provide the vehicle by

which planned change can take place and whereby " if universities are to be able to meet the challenges of the present or future, it appears that a major change in the culture of the organisation and probably in the degree to which democratic processes can operate". (CUA and APA 1990).

It is difficult to imagine the academic mandarin described by Ringer (1969) as seeing the involvement of Touche Ross as having anything to contribute to the workings of an academic career resting on the production of a cultured elite divorced from the materialist interests of the society. Closer to home, it lends weight to the considerations of Halsey (1992) who sees change in the academic identity as a process of proletarianization. This, he defines as a threefold reduction of power and advantage in the work and the market place position of a class or occupational group; in autonomy of working activity, security of employment and chances of promotion. How far this can be said to be universal in such a diverse system of higher education is hard to reach and as Becher (1989) has demonstrated there are enormous inbuilt resistances to change within the system and there is little doubt that the cultural myths live on.

What Halsey (1992) has identified in his research is the shifts in the way the academic career is defined and experienced as a result of moves from an elite to something like a mass system of higher education. The question remains however about how comprehensively these are experienced and accepted. The current change literature appears to rest on the need to challenge traditional cultural and institutional practices which suggest that the donnish dominion of Halsey (1992) nor the mandarin class of Ringer (1969) are completely redundant even if they may only live on in some institutions.

It can be seen that in the periphery of the change agenda, that staff development begins to emerge as a mechanism for change. Because of the implicit or explicit recognition of cultural change as a mechanism for institutional change and the apparent trend towards a mass higher education system in a climate of economic stringency, the profile of staff development begins to assume significance as a change agent.. These range from fairly modest moves to provide training for academics in handling more diverse student learning situations through such initiatives as the Enterprise in Higher Education Scheme, in which funding was made available to encourage curriculum innovation and change which included staff development as a means of institutional change. (Newby 1994). Others to more grandiose schemes that could restructure the whole of the higher learning environment. What does appear to be the case is that the objectives of staff development can be seen in the 1990s to be in stark contrast to that advocated in the decades after the Second World War. No longer an adjunct to a professional identity built around academic subject but emerging as a part of the reconstruction of what is defined as the professional in higher education. It is to this changing staff development agenda and the degree to which it is effective that we now turn.

## CHAPTER 2.

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT: the changing nature of demand**

In any analysis of staff development for academic staff in institutions that are modelled, no matter how loosely, on traditional western concepts of the university, it is necessary to acknowledge the historical contradictions in the idea of how one prepares oneself for the academic career. With its Socratic traditions of questioning, doubt, knowledge as tentative and criticism being central to the search for truth, the idea of training other than as a training of the intellect to engage in the debate, fits uneasily with the apparent certainties and narrow utilitarianism of much of the staff development curriculum. Nor is the contradiction simply about content but crucially locked into questions about the way learning takes place. For example, if it is seen that "the most effective teaching consists of pulling ideas out of students, not drumming them in... where teaching essentially involves developing personal relationships....and the privacy of the classroom is preserved" (Bligh 1990) and furthermore, that how one does this is more of an art form than a trained response, then the value of staff development programmes will be less readily appreciated. In addition, if there are important values about the search for truth being subject-specific and one that emerges after a lengthy apprenticeship into the essential forms of academic discourse, the idea of centralised provision by staff who may have no clearly acknowledged subject specialism is likely to be less than enthusiastic.

Clearly the degree of distance that exists within and between institutions in regard to the Socratic view of educational content and process, will to some extent determine the way staff development is or is not embraced. There are wide variations in response and this is

particularly so across what was the binary divide but both nationally and internationally, similar issues are being addressed. In order to understand the issues surrounding staff development in the mid-1990s it is necessary to explore some of the key elements of the similarities and differences which have characterised staff development in higher education since the second world war. It is proposed to do so by looking at the demand for staff development, the degree to which demand has been met and to suggest that the staff development agenda both in terms of supply and demand is in the 1990s, significantly different to early periods.

Before doing so however, it is necessary to introduce the problematic of definition which will re-emerge in various guises and contexts throughout this document. The term staff development has many interpretations and throughout the literature applied to academic staff is used interchangeably with that of training. One of the earliest advocates of using the term staff development was made by Matheson (1981) in order to avoid the negative connotations associated with the word training. It is also the case that the heavy emphasis given to teaching and learning skills in the programmes organised centrally by employers serves to restrict the definition. More recently however the Universities and Colleges' Staff Development Agency has attempted to introduce a more comprehensive process in their call for continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff in higher education. (Occasional Green Paper No 10,UCoSDA,1994). In short this is a call for systematic planned staff development over the career span and embracing all functions. These arguments will be explored later, simply to note at this time that the term to be used (with some temerity) in the following discussion is staff development and refers to those activities where employers provide centralised activities to facilitate learning among their staff.

## **The Demand For Staff Development.**

The demand for wide-ranging staff development in British universities as distinct from a narrow and marginalised interest in training for certain kinds of teaching has emerged during the 1980s. Calls for training of the newly-appointed university teacher was evident for at least two decades earlier but although it gained widespread if limited acceptance, it did not challenge custom and practice in any radical sense. Before the emergence of the current staff development agenda, calls for training came in many guises - some loud and clear, others inferred; some out of interest in effective learning particularly in what was anticipated as a different type of student intake, others more concerned with the economy of higher education.

Since the mid 1980s the focus on the economy of higher education has become paramount and has resulted in a trend, still very imprecise and yet to be fully accepted, of a concern for the utilisation of staff resources in ways more reminiscent of human resource management theory, increasingly popular in industry and commerce.

All of these trends, to a larger or lesser extent, throw considerable light on the dominant cultural climate of academic life which had survived for centuries and the way new priorities gain legitimacy. In the space of a few years the new managerialism not only challenges the collegial nature of decision-making and management but in the process, attempts to redefine the roles and responsibilities of senior staff. Alongside, the working life of the academic is under increasing scrutiny and centralised control. Staff development can be seen therefore as a means of increasing production and challenging the culture which is seen to limit expansion, financial stringency and the development of a more utilitarian curriculum. This is well indicated in a report produced by a consortium of interests including BP International, the government

Training Agency and the Royal Society of Arts advocating wider and increased access to higher education and a more "relevant" curriculum in which it is argued that - " all of these new approaches call for careful and systematic staff development with a review as much of attitudes to teaching and learning as of new techniques if they are to be fully effective. If higher education (as opposed to research) is ever to become a fully professional activity, more attention must be given to staff development".(RSA 1989).

Bearing in mind that the term staff development was not in common usage until the mid 1980s as far as higher education is concerned; what was seen as significant before this time is that academics, particularly the newly-recruited, should receive some preparation in teaching skills. Demand for training in the pre - 1980s climate came from academics, from "employers" in the form of government sponsored committees, including the then University Grants Committee (UGC) as well as from the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) and the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP). Another major player in regard to the polytechnics was the Council for National Academic Awards in their concern to not only assess the scholarship content of courses but also the qualities of the staff who would be responsible for them.

Possibly the most vociferous came from students and continuous interest was shown by the Association of University Teachers. Many academics also had over the years developed research and training interests in this field demonstrated in the work of such organisations as the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE), the University of London Teaching Methods Unit and what was originally the Standing Conference of Educational Development Services in Polytechnics (SCEDSIP).

These demands need to be weighed against the frequent references in the literature to resistance on the part of many staff to the idea of training (Matheson 1981, Harding 1978) and an evident low priority placed on systematic staff development by institutions.(Keep and Sisson 1992). The Association of University Teachers point out that resistance from individual members of staff was not the only issue but needed to be seen in the light of institutional approaches as well. As late as 1982 the proposal made over many years that each university should have a special unit for staff development had not materialised because of a combination of " institutional indifference, pedagogical scepticism, personal inhibition or hostility and lack of encouragement" (AUT 1982).

This is reflected in the emphasis on the voluntary principle of involvement that underpinned all available training opportunities. An examination of these earlier calls for training and the definitions of need which characterised them, is important in understanding the distinctive shifts which have taken place in recent years and which are in the 1990s, hardening into policy. It is also necessary as a means of analysing what is currently being attempted in the institutions which form the basis of this research and the difficulties that staff development personnel encounter.

For convenience, in this chapter pre- 1980s demand is considered from two main sources:-

- \* students through the National Union of Students.
- \* "employer" interests and committees.

The next chapter will explore demand and encouragement for training from the relevant professional associations and from consortia of academic researchers.

### **The Student Lead Demand for Training.**

The response of students to the question of teacher training of university staff is most readily available from the work of the National Union of Students who have been pro-active in this field for many years. In 1967 they sponsored the Commission on Teaching in Higher Education which reported in 1969. (NUS 1969). The function of the Commission was to systematically gauge student opinion about teaching methods in higher education including the universities. In addition to student opinion and experience in regard to standards of lecturing, opinion was sought on student participation in course structure and content and relationships between students and tutors. The general conclusions being that there was an absence of training for academic staff, considerable need for it and an apparent unwillingness on the part of academics to do anything about it. Many of the comments indicated that there were very strong negative feelings from many students, with descriptions of having to endure inadequate teaching methods and of feelings of powerlessness to do anything about it. University students were the most profuse in their criticism even though they represented a minority of the students surveyed.

The research can be criticised on two fronts, one in regard to the degree to which it was comprehensive, given that it was based on a sample of only eight institutions, two art colleges, two colleges of education, two technical colleges and two universities. The Commission recognised this and the fact that most of the responses were heavily weighted towards first year students, in spite of the fact that all students doing degree level work were approached. The Commission's explanation for the latter being, that first year students may be more idealistic and optimistic that they can bring about change and that students in other years were

likely to be more resigned to the situation. To what extent the Commission is right in the latter assumptions is of course open to question, and there are problems in drawing definitive conclusions from a limited sample.

The second criticism levelled at the work centred on questions about the degree to which the NUS could represent the interests of all students. This is always a problem with representative organisations and one always levelled when conclusions are uncomfortable. The fact that there were so many negative responses cannot however be ignored particularly when put alongside concerns from employers and academic staff organisations. Frustrated by a perceived lack of action the National Union of Students started in 1980 a national lecturer training campaign with the slogan "They know it ..but can they teach it?".(NUS a.b.c 1980). Later, following involvement in a seminar organised by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in July 1985, a press release was issued entitled "Lecturer Training Plans - too little too late" (NUS 1985). Unequivocal concern was expressed about the standard of much university teaching and the paucity of training available; "for more than twenty years students, through the NUS, have been demanding that university lecturers should obtain employment only when their ability to teach has been established and that they should undergo proper training for the job."

It goes on to state that "too many surveys have proved how real and how sizeable is dissatisfaction with some of their teaching among many university students. On no other subject over the past six years have university students contacted the education department of NUS more often and more consistently year after year." The pressures which were being faced by the modern university of financial stringency and of calls to increase relevance in the interests of the economy were noted, with the result that in the view of NUS "universities will

need to change not only what they teach but how they teach it." Also that " without a gigantic increase in academic staff training...it is hard to believe that they (academics) will be capable of shouldering it".(NUS 1985).

The fact that similar responses from students was found by the Hale and Robbins Committees (1964 and 1963) during the joint research for their respective reports adds further weight to NUS claims. It should be noted however that in their survey of student opinion, although criticism of teaching methods, particularly poorly delivered lectures, was clearly evident, the remedies for other forms of learning were less clear - apart from a general desire by students for more small group, interactive methods. It does appear from all the available evidence that for a long time many students have been dissatisfied with the teaching they receive in universities.

It also seems to be the case that student dissatisfaction with the teaching they encountered at university was, according to Truscott (1943) well to the fore in the 1930s as well. Certainly from the point of view of organised student opinion there are clear demands for a more systematic approach to teacher training for the academic before and after appointment. In fact it led to a mini industry in research in which attempts were made to explore whether particular students respond to particular methods. In a review of some of this work Beard et al (1978) refer to the work of Woodford (1969) and McLiesh (1968), in which the former found that on the whole students favoured methods involving participation but there were differences dependent on personality variables along an introversion - extroversion continuum. McLiesh found eight roughly distinguishable types, from enthusiasts who liked all methods to rebels who liked none.

Beard and colleagues (1978) point out the weaknesses of many of these surveys but also seem to question the validity of testing out student opinion. They acknowledge that "it is of interest that there is much to report about students' and teachers' opinions of different teaching methods, but there are still relatively few inquiries of their effects on teaching. Although consumer satisfaction deserves some consideration, in the long run it is measures of effective learning that count". In a back-handed way whether intentional or not, this kind of thinking challenged the legitimacy of student opinion and by providing fuel to the resistant appeared to cast doubt of the efficacy of training. An example of this can be seen in the work of Wilson (1981) who argues that "there is little direct evidence on how and to what extent particular teaching methods promote student learning....The crucial evaluation of teaching in higher education ought to be in terms of student learning. Instead, most of it has been on student preferences for different forms of staff-student contact, or their perceptions of the effectiveness of staff in their teaching role".

### **"Employer"- Led Demand For Training".**

In looking at employer-led demand, it is important to note that the bulk of the discussion will be focussed on the "older" universities though, as will be illustrated later some of the key developments in the area of staff development took place in the polytechnics. The decision to focus on the employer as applied to the "older" universities therefore, is not to marginalise the contribution of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP) but in recognition that as a body their involvement is less in evidence than that of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP). The reason for this is that the management of polytechnics was closely involved with that of local authorities and hence the negotiations at a national level of the CDP were more muted. It is generally accepted that as a result the developments in the field of staff

training was a more bottom-up process in the polytechnics than in the “older” universities with locally-based activists making the important moves. Another reason for the focus on “older” universities is that the way the CVCP operated and its relationships with government are indicative of an academic culture that to a larger or lesser extent is influencing the current debates about corporatism, accountability and functionality. In a way, the role of the CVCP and government in the way demand for staff development was expressed and enacted, speaks volumes about the way cultural elites operate across a variety of arenas.

It is necessary in looking at employer-led demand for training in the pre - managerialist climate of the post war years to recognise the difficulty in the using the concept of the employer in the university context of the time. All universities in Britain were in important senses individual and autonomous institutions protected by charter or statute. Furthermore, that within each institution, management and control was in theory and largely in practice, vested in a collectivity of senior academics via Senate and Faculty. In reality, the decision making process can be seen to operate at somewhat different levels - by individual or small groups of academics, within departments where high levels of autonomy were the norm. Even today in a more managerialist climate there is doubt in defining who "call the shots" - as pointed out by Zellick (1992) in reference to the government veto in that year, of the CVCP/AUT pay deal.

In the pre - 1990s climate where the theory of the community of scholars concept of management held sway, the autonomy of academics and the dominance of the departments and the implications for developing teaching expertise is well described by Mathias (1984) "the strength and political power of departments as basic units derive primarily from claims of specialist knowledge and expertise. The professional mystery created around a subject

makes it difficult for those outside it to challenge or cast judgement on how teaching and research, say, are organised." This emphasis on the power of departments and by implication senior staff in them is significant. Written before the emphasis on the ideas of corporatism and managerialism became part of the common parlance of the 1990s, it is clear that the claims of expertise and departmental priorities are still significant in the way that the development of staff is understood. In fact one of the most significant findings of the research undertaken for this thesis is the power that is still exercised by departmental heads in the viability of staff in development programmes. Furthermore, that there is a need to see this not so much as a pathological response but one which could have value if a wider concept of staff development is to emerge.

The role of the Vice-Chancellor was in the three decades after the second world war even more complex. Always influential in terms of dissemination of information and in formal access to influence outside the university, the role was not generally seen prior to the Jarratt Report (1985) as managerial, but more one as advisory and representative. The Jarratt Report (1985) spelt out the situation clearly, "We have been especially struck ...with the wide range of management styles and modes of operating which characterise the Vice-Chancellors... In some cases.....as providing leadership and exercising executive authority.....in others as primarily as that of a chairman seeking consensus." The report clearly expresses concern for the variety of roles and the virtual lack of any constitutional power for the vice chancellor and argues that "No one can doubt the need for the Vice-Chancellor to be seen as the academic leader.....But to enable the institution to survive and to seize the opportunities open to it in the future, the Vice-Chancellor will have to adopt a clear role as the executive leader.. and have the necessary authority to carry it out". (Jarratt 1985). This being the case, the idea of seeing the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals as

employers prior to the mid 1980s has some ambiguity attached to it. Even in the mid 1990s the issues are no less complex in that "the CVCP has an ambiguous relationship with the universities, representing as it does "management", and negotiating with the Association of University Teachers as well as with government" (Duke 1992). It may well be that the rituals of senate activities and the general civility and apparent collectivity of interests within a particular university served to conceal the realities of employer/employee relationships.

The role of the directors of polytechnics is less clear, heading institutions which lacked the relative autonomy of the universities and being accountable to a wide range of public bodies, not least the local education authorities but also the Regional Advisory Councils and a range of other interested bodies including professional associations. For example the Governing Body of Woolwich Polytechnic in 1961 included representatives from three local authorities, the University of London, the War Department and a number of professional interests.(Locke 1978). As an organisation the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics founded in 1970 was not as strong as the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals founded in 1919 and understandably so. The need to have a strong organisation for a collectivity of autonomous institutions negotiating with national government was an important spur to the CVCP whereas the polytechnic directors were more directly accountable to the local authority in which they were situated. This difference does appear to have had an impact on the way staff development emerged in the early 1970s, being generated by CVCP, AUT and NUS in the university sector and by individual academics and collectivities of interested individuals in the polytechnic sector.(Greenaway and Harding 1978).

It is possible to see the government as an employer, either operating through the Department of Education and Science or the Universities Funding Council, given the overwhelming

dependence of universities on state funding. On the other hand the apparent autonomy of the universities both individually and collectively until the 1980s served to marginalise the role of government in the way the university operated. The very existence of what is now the Universities Funding Council is because government has not been an employer in direct managerial and control terms. In describing the emergence of a committee structure to act as an agent for grant aiding universities in the late 1880s, which in 1919 was to become the University Grants Committee, Shinn (1986) points out that "by establishing a committee free of the government to allocate the money it had also accepted university autonomy and academic authority within the university".

This view was reinforced by Sir Eric Ashby (1968) in a paper specifically designed to demonstrate the success of the then University Grants Committee in protecting the interests of the university system. He points out that the composition of the committee was overwhelmingly dominated by academics who had been highly successful in securing funds from government and even more successful in maintaining the autonomy of each university about how the funds were spent. This is because of the confidence it enjoyed from government. "Until 1968 its accounts were not even subject to parliamentary scrutiny" (Ashby 1968). Traditionally, however, government intervention in the universities has been mainly centred on fiscal issues and broad areas of policy and obviously, given its low priority, it did not include any involvement in considerations of the development of academic staff. This role of the UGC rested on the buffer principle in which the government of the day "acknowledged the freedom of the universities to manage their own affairs without interference, even though they were partly funded by government.....it is the job of higher education to seek and publicise the truth....it has an important role in the preservation of democracy and good government that is worth paying for." (Bligh 1990). It needs to be noted

that when these ideas were being established in the first quarter of the 20th century the proportion of university income from government was small; as it grew the buffer principle lost ground and now can be said to have been abandoned.

On the other hand elements of the idea still pervade and an understanding of the complex relationship between higher education and the state is essential to make sense of present day crisis theorists. This complex relationship is to some extent mirrored in the way universities have in the past connected with government departments. The way the then University Grants Committee was responsible to the Minister of Education generally or whether direct to the Treasury was not clear cut. Indeed since the inception of the UGC there has been debate, some of it very acrimonious about whether the committee should be responsible to treasury or education officials.

Those supporting the former, according to Shinn (1986), on the basis of retaining academic freedom and independence, those in favour of the latter on the grounds of educational co-ordination and accountability. It is clear, however, that since the Second World War and the assumption of overall responsibility for the universities by the Department of Education and Science in 1964, the education ministries have won and this has hardened considerably since the latter part of the 1980s. The point is that some of the concerns expressed by government sponsored committees and by senior academics in the 1960s and 1970s did so in a different managerial climate than more recent pronouncements. This partly explains the fact that statements about staff developments that were made then were more likely to be couched in the form of recommendations requiring relatively minor adjustments to training provision.

The rather cosy world described by Carswell (1985), a senior civil servant "on the border between the state and the universities" for eighteen years would seem to have gone. It may be the case that soirees in Holland Park, described by Carswell, of the minister, senior civil servants and prominent people in education and politics meeting over drinks to discuss issues of shared concern and to arrive at some consensus of opinion still take place. One suspects not and even if they did, whether they have the same impact on educational policies in the mid 1990s as they did under Crosslands' ministry in the mid 1960s is open to question.

Employer-led demand for training needs therefore, to be seen in the light of these processes and the fact that the relationship between what one can call employer interests are not necessarily homogeneous and even less so prior to the Jarratt Committee Report (1985). The key features of what can be seen as employer demand for training is to a large extent contradictory. With very few exceptions, policy documents on the subject of higher education since the second world war, have supported the need for the training of the academic in teaching methods particularly directed at the newly-recruited. On the other hand, an analysis of the kind of training required and the resources necessary for its implementation is notable by its absence.

All the emphasis is on in-service training and there seems to be a blind faith that senior academic staff, or others deemed to be successful teachers, also have the skills to prepare other staff for the tasks in hand. At no time is the in-service model seriously challenged, nor its complexities analysed. Instead, its rationale is argued in pragmatic terms, to some extent because of problems of resources but largely due to resistance to any other model. This was most evident in the deliberations of Hale Committee on University Teaching Methods appointed in 1961 by the University Grants Committee and reporting in 1964. After an

extensive survey of practice and opinion of all the universities fully established at that time, it was evident that in-service models were the only one achievable. Hale pointed out that "we are clear that any proposal to make a full-time course of training lasting for, say a year, a necessary qualification for a university appointment would receive no support at all." (Hale. 1964). It was also clear that the voluntary principle of attendance for training opportunities offered, or any method which involved a lengthy time commitment would also be a non-starter. As pointed out in the report "any arrangement which was obligatory, and which occupied much of the time of prospective or newly-appointed university teachers, might act as a serious deterrent to the recruitment by the universities of men and women whose primary interest was in scholarship and research."(Hale. 1964).

At no time did the Hale Committee consider the advisability of staff whose prime interests lay in research and scholarship, being required to teach nor the complexities of training staff to a role in which they had little motivation. Nor was the question of training for research part of their concern, the assumption presumably that the higher degree structures being part of the qualification for appointment, were sufficient. This is not to argue that there should be a division of labour between those who teach and those who pursue other pathways. It is simply to recognise, that the question of motivation was clearly seen by the committee but not confronted in terms which would further training. The view was however taken that "the present arrangements, if such they can be called, seems to us to be more haphazard than is desirable."(Hale. 1964).

It can with justice be argued that staff development systems are in the 1990s less haphazard than they were in the early 1970s but one cannot appreciate the issues now surrounding the question of compulsory in-service training, in the 1990s exercising the minds of staff

development personnel, without understanding the history of gradualism and voluntarism which has characterised employer-led policies in the past. Indeed, there is evidence that many of the problems and issues which were defined by the Hale Committee in the 1960s are still major inhibiting factors in the organisation of staff development in the British universities of the 1990s. It is possible to argue that the resistance to more systematic and comprehensive approaches to staff development in the 1960s and 1990s are rooted in very different manifestations of the desire to retain professional autonomy. The earlier period fuelled by understandings that expertise in ones subject automatically confers facility for its transmission; the 1990s located in a resistance to staff development based on corporate concerns when so much of the custom and practice of academic enquiry is under attack.

Another approach worth exploring stems from the impact of technology. Attempts to develop teaching skill by the use of technology was a logical next step from Robbins and Hale Committees particularly at a time when it was thought that a technological revolution was taking place in society at large. One can detect similiar pressures emerging from the possibilities from the developments in information technology. The pre and post-Robbins expansion of higher education and the soaring costs which resulted, led to the setting-up of the first of two committees under the chairmanship of Dr (later Sir) Brynmor Jones. The first committee (Brynmor Jones 1965) focused mainly on the use of audio visual-aids in teaching. Among its recommendations was the setting up of central service units within universities and a national centre. These would co-ordinate the investment in and the use of, audio visual equipment across the university. It was recognised that staff would need training and it was thought by the committee that this could be implemented with the use of summer schools or other vacation courses. Here again one can see a ccmmittee clearly seeing a need both in terms of resource planning and staff training but still trapped in the part-time

voluntary model. The committee was successful however, in encouraging universities to set up central audio visual units and it led to the University Grants Committee grant aiding a number of universities to invest in equipment and staff.

It is worth noting at this point the source of the initiatives for the establishment of many of the committees referred to above. It helps to demonstrate the interplay between government and what could be called the university-based employer interests. It also serves to emphasise the introduction of the Association of University Teachers into the "employer" based debate on academic staff training as distinct from its own initiatives. The Robbins Committee for example, was established by the Prime Minister of the day, the Hale Committee on academic staff training in general, which worked closely with Robbins in the research element, was established by the University Grants Committee. Initiative for the first Brynmor Jones Committee is shared between the University Grants Committee, the Department of Education and Science and the Scottish Education Department. By the time that the second Brynmor Jones intervention into the question of training occurs in 1971, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals took the initiative in the appointment of a working group but in close consultation with the University Grants Committee and the Association of University Teachers.

The importance is, that demand for training of the academic has often stemmed from alliances between sectional interests, the motivations and intentions of which are not easily accessible. A useful example can be seen in the Brynmor Jones Working Group on the Training of University Teachers which reported in 1972. The committee was established as a result of a number of pressures which had been building up since the mid - 1960s. These include student discontent and the campaign of the National Union of Students about teaching

standards. The opinion of many in government was that student unrest in the late 1960s was a product to some extent of poor staff/student relationships or even misguided teaching, particularly in the universities. All of which was clearly stated in the report of The Select Committee on Education and Science - Student Relations.(HMSO 1969). Here it was noted that student protest, often allied to academic protest was international in character, was intensely political around issues such as Vietnam, South Africa, Cuba and Greece. Furthermore, that many academics addressing large meetings of students "encouraged student activities". There were also pressures stemming from criticisms about the perceived lack of co-ordination between the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, the University Grants Committee and the Association of University Teachers in regard to student interest and needs.

Redefinition and reorganisation of academic staff terms of employment in regard to probation and criterion for promotion to tenure by the National Board for Prices and Incomes in 1968 added fuel to the fire, as did a change in negotiating machinery leading to a major review of salaries in 1971. A change of government with a more aggressive Minister of State for Education - Margaret Thatcher, appointed in 1970, will have done little to distract the mind. As Carswell (1985) pointed out, the appearance of Mrs Thatcher on the education scene heralded a period when all aspects of the education system were subjected to close scrutiny and with a view to seeing the inter - linkages between different sectors. The clear impression from his account being, that her appointment lead to a sharper analysis about the relationship between the education system and the universities. A foretaste of what was to come.

On the other hand there was no real challenge to university autonomy and still a clear commitment to the basic Robbins principle of a demand led higher education system. It was not until the 1980s, again with Mrs Thatcher to the fore, that this principle was challenged, with consequences of which included a shift in thinking about staff development. Other influences that should be noted in thinking about the late 1960s/early 1970s, is Britain's entry into the Common Market. The degree to which it influenced the training debate in the 1960s is open to question, but the comparability of qualifications issue was soon to have some effect on how academics saw themselves in relation to Europe. Within weeks of Britain's membership the question of comparability and the implications for universities was formally on the Association of University Teachers' agenda (AUT 1973).

Here one can see from the late 1960s the CVCP, UGC and AUT reading the writing on the wall and realising they must grab the initiative before the government, a process which with different alliances, can still be seen in operation today. In many senses the processes leading to the appointment of the Brynmor Jones Working Party in 1971 by the CVCP in collaboration with the UGC and AUT can be seen as a watershed in the way academic staff training to teach was approached. By working from an assumption that a more formalised system of staff training was needed, the working group was able to pave the way for a clearer local remit for each university and the beginnings of a national system of co-ordinated effort to improve the standard of training. The significant recommendations of the working group was a reaffirmation of training for the newly-appointed academic, with an induction period of two to three days followed by opportunities for further training either on a concurrent or short block basis. Furthermore, new staff should be put in touch with a senior academic who would act as mentor and that training of a more advanced nature should be available after several years of appointment for all staff. (CVCP 1972).

In addition, staff in each university should be allocated duties designed to keep abreast of training and that regional and national training opportunities should be developed. Possibly of most importance was the recommendation that a co-ordinating committee on staff training be established on a national basis, which would represent the interests of the CVCP, AUT, UGC and NUS. Clearly the criticisms of the government in the search for the causes of student unrest had been influential. In many senses the reactions to the working group recommendations illustrate well the creeping gradualism which characterises the subject of academic staff training. Again the model depends on in-service training with time allocations totalling less than a month in the academic career. The voluntary principle reigned supreme, both applied to institutions and to individual academics. The response of the CVCP to the 1972 Brynmor Jones Report was to seek opinion about the recommendations but at the same time making it clear that there was no intention to lay down the law on what training each university might determine.

Where the CVCP was most proactive was when in 1972 it took up the suggestion of the establishment of a consultative committee with a paid official on secondment, an appointment which started in the following year. The Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers which emerged was for the next seven years to keep the question of training on the agenda and to provide some of the most comprehensive evidence about the range and extent of training available. The work of this committee and its officers will be considered later when the supply of training is examined. The important feature at this time is to note the creation of a co-ordinating framework for training, marking a shift in employer-led demand at a national level.

At a local level this was matched by an increase in the number of locally-based training committees and a more comprehensive commitment to training at least for the newly-appointed academic. Possibly more important was the fact that staff in individual universities charged with the duty of implementing training programmes had available a nationally based officer, whose job it was, to keep abreast of what was happening generally. In addition, in some areas there was a bringing together of interested universities on a regional basis such as the alliance between Leicester, Loughborough and Nottingham universities, creating for many a more co-ordinated approach to training. It also marks the emergence of a sharing of experience internationally.

The fact that there was a national committee with officers, also ensured that regular reports on training were placed before the CVCP, making it less likely that the training question would get lost. The commitment and interest in staff training of the limited kind developed during this time was not to last. This can be seen in the later actions of the CVCP when the work of the Co-ordinating Committee on Training was reviewed together with that of its staff. The following description of the review of CCTUT rests heavily on the account of Matheson (1981) who was the second and last officer to the committee in the form it took after the 1972 Brynmor Jones Report.

He describes how in 1978 a decision was taken to review the workings of the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers and to make recommendations for its future. This led to the establishment of the Pitt Review Group chaired by Sir Harry Pitt with a broad membership which included representatives from CVCP and AUT. According to Matheson the review group was responding to a number of pressures including what appeared to be a spiralling cost of the CCTUT, the need for a more adequate staffing base to

the committee, problems arising from university autonomy and centralised provision and a resistance in some quarters to anything with the word training attached to it. Indeed Matheson argues for the use of the term staff development to overcome resistance.

The end result being that although the Pitt Review Group recommended the continuation and strengthening of the CCTUT, the CVCP in 1980 took a decision that in effect meant that within one year the responsibility for staff training would fall on individual universities. The main rationale was based on financial considerations and the stated belief that universities should be responsible for the amount of staff training made available. The role of a national committee should be to encourage liaison; it would be reconstituted to form the Committee on the Training of University Teachers (CTUT) with no budget or staff but a representation which would include that of CVCP, AUT, and NUS. Its purpose should be to "meet from time to time to review the current provision for the training of university teachers and to ensure that universities were made aware of this provision" (Pitt Report 1980).

It is clear from this that the role of employers in the demand for staff training until the mid-1980s, had been one characterised by an ebb and flow of interest and a reluctance to establish any system which challenged university autonomy and the individual freedom of the academic. It is also evident that interest seems to be associated with times of crisis and change. The pre and post-Robbins expansion generated interest in the mid nineteen sixties, because of the supposed difficulties that would arise from institutional growth and a wider catchment of students; in the late nineteen sixties and seventies, the impetus was provided by student unrest.

It is important to note however, that even at its height the experience of individual members of staff in employer-led training opportunities to fulfil their roles as distinct from subject development was marginal in the extreme. The evidence produced by Matheson in 1981 in regard to the universities of the time indicates that the average length of time that any academic spent on centralised training was between one and a half and five days per academic career and then usually in the first year of appointment.

By the early 1980s financial stringencies generated from the concern of government to reduce public expenditure, shifted the question of training back to individual universities. Although public statements by, for example, the CVCP supported the notion of training, actions such as the unwillingness to continue grant-aiding the national training machinery clearly indicates that priorities had changed. The increasing awareness of the intention of government to control costs, introduce market mechanisms, increase competition across the binary divide and within the university sector, the increasing role of research performance as a means of protecting status coupled with a determined shift by government to create a demand not a supply led higher education system did nothing to raise the status of staff development. It was to be a later manifestation of "crisis" when the pressures to corporatism and managerialism took hold alongside the growing interest in institutional control and cultural change came more to the fore.

It is probably therefore not surprising that, with such pressures building up, university managers would not see a national co-ordinating machinery on something as tendentious as training being of high priority. Furthermore, the way government policy was enacted has served to emphasise and to increase the competitiveness between institutions. The CCTUT was founded on ideas of collaboration, sharing and co-ordination; the increased fragmentation

and individualism between universities reinforced by selective grant allocation on notions of perceived value did not generate the kind of co-ordination originally envisaged and particularly so in an aspect of provision not seen as having high priority.

The idea of a league table of universities was particularly destructive to the idea of co-ordinated staff training as was the emphasis on research as a measure of value. One professor stated after his department was negatively placed in the league table of Earth Science departments "I think that we are going to create a series of fairly large departments to be provided with excellent human and equipment resources which will be able to do some outstanding research. What I think is more uncertain is the cost in terms of the training opportunities at undergraduate level. Good research does not always go hand in hand with good teaching, but you do need a good research base to retain good teachers. It will leave a number of departments less well resourced....". He also raised questions about the level of expertise of those making the judgements which lead to a league table. (Radford 1988).

The importance for any discussion on academic staff training is to recognise that the climate in which training or the new designation of staff development takes place in the 1990s is of a different order than in the 1960s and 70s, even though there were even then some indications of the climate to come. The disestablishment of some 5,600 academic and academic-related staff during the first half of the 1980s (Kogan 1993) led the way, as did the increasing casualisation of staff referred to above. The introduction of performance profiles on a more systematic basis for all members of staff, created a new interest in staff development fuelled by massification, accountability and relevance agendas.

At a macro-level one can see this as an outcome of the kind of processes discussed by Scott (1984) in his analysis of the trend from an elitist to a universal system of higher education and the inevitable problems of how this would be resourced. At a micro-level the emphasis by the government of the day to control public sector expenditure in the widest sense and to introduce market forces in the belief that this would lead to more efficient resource allocation fuelled the change climate.

The central preoccupation of university managers from the late 1980s can be seen as a combination of economics and status - the two closely bound to each other. It is evident from the plethora of policy statements made by government, the UGC and the CVCP during the 1980s that value for money are major issues on the agenda of higher education, the government clearly seeing this as linked to general economic performance indicators in the country as a whole. In spite of the protestations of Maurice Shock the chair of the CVCP at the time that "compared with the sudden and traumatic cuts of 1981/84, our future prospects are more like a lingering and painful illness, the Green Paper, The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s has not been buried but is being enacted".(Shock 1985)

As far as the question of training is concerned the major significance lies in how staffing of universities is now perceived by government and those charged with managing the universities. "Staff are the major cost in a university" so states the CVCP report "The Future of the Universities (1986). The report goes on to point out that this represents 65% of total expenditure and that cuts in grant since 1981 had an immediate effect of cutting back on the number of staff posts. Nor is this evident only in regard to relatively junior posts, Judd (1988) commenting on a report of the Standing Conference of Arts and Social

Sciences in Universities points out that between 1981 and 1987 seventy two professorial posts - about 9% had been lost.

The question of training therefore can be seen as influenced by a number of factors, not all compatible and conducive to the development of good practice. The key elements in the 1980s are economic cuts, pressures to perform mainly in research and publications, management and government desires to exercise greater control over staffing levels - particularly in regard to flexibility. Staff concerns about job security and promotion, the latter closely linked in the academic world to the status of the institution. As far as employers are concerned there has been a renewed interest in training. A Code of Practice for Academic Staff Training was produced by the CVCP in 1986, which proposed that all universities establish a training committee, serviced by either a part or full time member of staff. Staff at all levels should be offered training opportunities and that senior staff should set an example by participating fully in training offered.

Furthermore, the training offered should be university and department-based and should include induction courses for new staff and other training opportunities in the form of short courses and seminar programmes which take into account research interests and those of academic management and leadership. The recommended time allocation over a three-year cycle is fifteen days for new staff, nine days for experienced staff and seven days for heads of departments.

This kind of approach was much more in line with what polytechnics were doing at the time. Much of the pattern of provision in the polytechnics stemmed from the quality stringencies and scrutiny imposed by the Committee for National Academic Awards, paradoxically involving

academics from universities who were not subject to the same level of examination. It was further impelled by the closer ties with industry and commerce and the involvement of local government, resulting in the fact that polytechnics had always had a more pro-active stance to staff training than existed in most universities. Even though recent research which will be explored later suggests that the considerable variation in quality and range evident in the university sector is also evident in the ex-polytechnic sector.

It is nevertheless the case that "institutions familiar with the practice of CNAAs and its related mechanisms for course review and validation found it easier....to undertake thorough-going curriculum development and enhance students' learning in a concerted way." (Sandberg and Sommerlad 1989). Furthermore, Farnham (1988) argues that the separation from local authority control in the late 1980s marked a watershed in the way polytechnics saw their personnel functions. Free from local government involvement they could plan the kind of staffing structure and how it would be utilised in ways that were not possible before.

In the universities of the mid 1980s however, the question of who should decide that a member of staff should attend training opportunities demonstrates that the CVCP was at this stage caught up with managerial concerns about effectiveness but still wedded to the concept of academic freedom. Nowhere is this better indicated than the statements in the Code of Practice. On page three it states that "responsibility for professional development rests with the individual. University teachers should be free to choose the training activities in which they engage" in addition "attendance at training courses could be included in submissions to promotion committees at the end of probation, at the efficiency bar and in applications for senior posts".(CVCP 1986).

In 1989 the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals once again established a central Staff Development and Training Unit (USDTU), more adequately resourced than the earlier Co-ordinating Committee. The role of the USDTU, now the Universities and Colleges' Staff Development Agency (UCoSDA) will be explored later in examining the supply of staff development, suffice it to note at this time that the decision to establish USDTU in 1989 was based on significantly different understandings of need both institutional and personal, than that leading to the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers in 1972. Training in the 1990s, as far as employer interests is concerned is now firmly tied up with appraisal systems, quality assurance schemes, questions of institutional mission and corporate identity, academic status and financial viability. There is also evidence which will be explored later of considerable ambiguity in the way the renewed interest in what is now called staff development is manifested, with distinct shifts towards a compulsory involvement for newly-recruited staff, whilst at the same time continuing the voluntary principle for other staff. There are also major disconnections between elements of what can be seen as the components of staff development which suggests that employers have yet to establish clear policies and practices.

On the other hand the fact that this demand is growing lends support for the Halsey (1992) thesis of proletarianization. It is difficult to envisage the "donnish dominion" identifying with the macro concerns of elitism versus massification or academic staff development, no matter how defined. How then have post 2nd World War trends in staff development impacted on and been influenced by academics? It is to this we now turn.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

### **ACADEMICS AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT.**

What has been the role of academics in the developing and changing agenda for staff development? It is necessary at the outset to acknowledge the difficulty in assessing the contribution and reaction of staff to the issues and trends outlined above. It has to be said that, with notable exceptions, as could be expected, academics have not en masse been banging at the door of senior staff, demanding staff development opportunities provided by employers. In fact, it is rare to read any account on the need for staff development as part of institutional planning that does not comment on the resistance, or lack of enthusiasm of staff in regard to opportunities offered to them (Matheson 1981, Beard and Hartley 1984, Smith and Smith 1993). Nor apparently is it a purely British phenomenon, but a similar pattern of response is evident in other countries. It seems that in spite of enormous differences of history, tradition, economic and social structures there are many similarities in the way academics define their career and the conditions in which it can be fostered, which lifts the analysis out of the merely parochial.

For example Foster and Roe (in Teather 1979) exploring staff development in Australian universities argue that where it exists the emphasis is on the teaching role. Furthermore, it is not considered sufficiently important to maintain statistics on the take-up of opportunities and given the voluntary nature of involvement is likely to be small as, in their view, the majority of Australian academic staff would not respond. Interestingly, in a later publication Roe and colleagues (1986) in a highly detailed publication on reviewing and evaluating academic performance in Australia, reference to staff development is notable by its absence. Later, Moss (1988) found in her research in Australia that it was the newly-appointed university staff who

were more interested in staff development opportunities than senior staff. She also noting a lack of interest among academics in Sweden and in Germany.

Although rather dated now, but of interest because of similarity to the British situation of the time, the work of Hacquaert (1967) is significant in collating a wide range of international information which clearly indicates a lack of interest in staff development in India, in nine Latin American universities and generally in the United States of America. In regard to the latter it is a view shared by Gaff (in Teather 1979) who comments on the piecemeal and inadequate approach to staff training of the American academic and although noting a growth in the number of staff development programmes, their adequacy and general availability is open to question. Around the same time Millar (1976) describes a similar picture in South Africa which he attributes to the dominance of scholarship and research in the order of priorities among academics and institutions. Effective preparation, particularly for the teaching role requires organised effort and cannot in his view, "be done effectively on a part-time basis by busy staff". Harding et al (1981) paints a more optimistic picture describing the sharing of information at a conference in Oxford attended by delegates responsible for staff development in universities from eighteen countries. Here it is noted that there is a significant increase of interest in staff training by institutions, but of course this still leaves open the question of whether this interest is shared by academics.

It is of course important that in trying to compare a selected set of institutions such as universities, particularly across national boundaries, that one proceeds with some caution. The difficulties of generalising across British institutions, given the history of independence, cherished autonomy and very different histories and traditions is only too evident. Attempts at international comparison not only serves to multiply the complexity, they pose real problems

of access to sufficiently comprehensive and comparable information. As A.H. Halsey states in the foreword to Williamson's book *Education, Social Structure and Development* (1979) "comparative sociology is fiendishly difficult. It has always strained to the uttermost the resources of theory and method available". Nevertheless, there is some evidence that suggests that similar processes might be at work in other countries and this would not be surprising given the international orientation of the most prestigious universities of the world, the influence of colonialism and of Socratic ideas about the process of higher learning. In fact Friedman(1982) suggests that there is something inherent about academe which does not predispose staff to accept innovation and change. A phenomenon echoed by the work of Kuhn (1962) in his view of the institutionalised forms of resistance to new ideas.

The significance to this work is that there is an academic culture which may not be automatically compatible with corporate interests in staff development, particularly that focused on teaching and learning skills. This is clearly reflected in the literature referred to above but it would be over-simple to see this purely as an expression of bloody-minded individualism or only of professional self-interest. On the other hand despite the emphasis on teaching in the traditional university ( Scott 1984) the dominance during this century of research and publication in the way the academic career is realised across academic disciplines (Becher 1989) cannot be ignored.

Possibly of equal if not more importance in any discussion on the concept of staff development as far as academics are concerned, is to acknowledge that in its ideal typical form, development is an integral part of the work. The constant need to keep abreast of one's subject, the norms governing the public nature of enquiry particularly in regard to publication, ensures that the academic can never "stand still" if the successful career is to be achieved. In this sense it is

argued that "academics are constantly being judged.....reputation, not money, is what motivates"(Bligh 1990). Whether academics are any more immune from cash nexus considerations than any other occupational group is open to debate, but it is the case that promotion and career advance in general is tied to the willingness to submit oneself to the judgement of peers, more often than not, in a very public and critical manner. Although this activity is recognised and rewarded in the myriad ways that academic status is achieved, it is not defined or credited as staff development.

Furthermore, one could argue that the process of achieving appropriate qualifications for appointment, is sufficient indication of extensive involvement in staff development activity in order to perform the roles expected of them. Here again there is a similar lack of acknowledgement in staff development profiling. Yet this kind of activity, inherent to the preparation for the career, strongly influenced reactions to the role of centralised staff development in matters of research, among the academics particularly those with PhDs, who were interviewed in the five universities in the study which will be described more fully later. The low rating to questions of whether centralised staff development could contribute to the performance of the research role was explained by such staff as unnecessary given their earlier training.

It will be argued later that effective staff development programmes must find ways of acknowledging and crediting the inherent staff development activity within and between subject areas. If one also considers questions about the degree to which all institutions have a tendency to reproduce practice the phenomena described by Matheson (1981) in regard to the teaching role assumes significance. He saw that one of the major inhibitors to staff development organised by employers was the apparent belief that knowledge of one's subject

confers facility in its dissemination. A similar process can be detected in regard to the new managerialism which has demanded skills and aptitudes not in common currency particularly in the "older" universities. Yet there is no widespread call for managerial training for senior staff in spite of the valiant efforts of the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency's attempts to foster the idea. (UCoSDA 1994) and the Fender Report (1994). In fact the evidence suggests that they are the least likely members to participate in staff development programmes. One can see therefore, that the lack of any comprehensive and legitimated track record in centralised staff development in higher education, nor any formal connection with integral staff development referred to above, presents major change problems to the status quo.

Part of the status quo which is deeply embedded in the concept of the academic as a professional is centred on autonomy and freedom, ideas which underpinned the establishment of tenure. Becher (1989) refers to the work of Klienman (1983) and his view that part of the socialisation process of the new academic is a covert pressure to individuation and that in effect one works for oneself. In this sense the collective concerns of the institution, say to improve teaching skills, would be less significant or even in conflict with individual concerns. This is also reflected in the work of Shattock (1991) who argues that disciplinary loyalties and concern for one's students do not necessarily extend to loyalty to one's employing institution. As with all ideas reality may be of a more prosaic order, but the way it impacts on staff development is in the idea of voluntarism about whether individuals choose to participate in programmes offered to them. It is possible to detect in the mid 1990s a distinct shift to ideas of compulsion particularly for newly appointed staff although evidence which will be outlined later, suggests this is still imprecise and variable in its application. Nevertheless the concept of voluntarism is a major issue in the emerging corporate interest/staff development agenda and it

is not clear how far the view of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals stated in 1987 has changed, if at all. In the Code of Practice on Staff Training (CVCP 1987) it clearly states " Responsibility for professional development ultimately rests with the individual. University teachers should be free to choose the training activities in which they engage." Consequently in any exploration of staff response to the moves to more employer led staff development, it is essential to take account of the structural issues which may be manifested in resistances that are more than a concern for priorities or suspicions of managerial intent.

On the other hand many academics have been active in addressing the issue of staff development in addition to subject-based development in higher education. Trying to gauge the extent of employee demand or interest in centralised staff development is however difficult. First, as in earlier discussions on employers there is a problem of definition and of representation. Vice-chancellors for example who have here been referred to within the category of employer could with some justification, in spite of the Jarratt Report (1985), be defined as employees, a problem which also confronts anyone trying to distinguish between professional management and other grades of staff in many other enterprises. Until relatively recently the key distinguishing feature as far as educational institutions at all levels is concerned is the traditional divide between academe, administration and management.

The traditional idea that universities are governed by a collectivity of scholars and that people like registrars are appointed to carry out the wishes of such a body, although increasingly challenged by the new managerialism, can still be detected even in institutions with a longer history of managerialist intervention. Whether one can argue a similar case for those who were called directors of polytechnics is open to debate. The more publicly accountable decision-making system institutionalised in the polytechnic system since its inception would lead one to

argue that logically this would emphasise a more hierarchical, managerialist culture. With these considerations in mind the following discussion will explore the role of academics by considering the role of the Association of University Teachers and that of academic researchers and trainers.

### **The Role of the Association of University Teachers:**

It is also the case that trying to gauge how far demand that is made is representative of opinion is equally elusive. One could argue that probably the most representative source as far as the "older" universities is concerned could be the Association of University Teachers (AUT) but there are weaknesses in too definite a claim in such terms. First of all the total membership of eligible staff has never been above 70% but only a tiny proportion of that figure are active members in the sense of attending meetings (Archer 1979). A slightly different picture is presented in 1989 in regard to the polytechnics, the staff of whom are historically more unionised than the universities - 78% in the polytechnic sector as compared with 63% in the universities. (Halsey 1992). Policies of AUT in common with other organised employee agencies result as much from core groups of activists as any detailed sounding out of opinion. Nor is this a maverick occurrence but stems as much from the complexities of running an association which addresses the needs and interests of a disparate and geographically dispersed membership than any imperatives of a Michelian law of oligarchy.

It is also the case that AUT treads a delicate and sensitive path between the needs of employees to have a centralised organisation particularly for the negotiation of terms and conditions of employment, and a membership which by and large ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> not inclined to collective action on other issues. Nor can it be claimed that its actual and potential membership is

united in its aims and objectives. This is well summed up by Archer (1979) writing about the post First World War period but still of relevance, if not more so today, in that "university teachers were divided amongst themselves over the contradictory demands for expansion or retrenchment, technology or culture, utility or elitism." It is true that during the 1980s a more campaigning stance about the shape and future of universities was evident but this can be seen as a direct response to a more aggressive interventionist style from government and was shortlived.

It is evident from the lack of any consistent action, either in terms of work stoppage or curtailment of certain activities, that AUT is not cast in the same mould as the National Union of Teachers. The fact that it is called an association and not a trade union, despite the fact that in its early years pay and conditions dominated any other considerations, is more than just a semantic difference. Rather it is indicative of a professional self-image which at one level recognises the need for a certain amount of collectively organised representation particularly in regard to nationally agreed salary levels, but one that is also distinguishable from the oppositional and what can be seen as narrowly sectarian roots of a trade union.

In many senses this can be seen as logical given the fact that, in tandem with similar associations such as the National Association of Local Government Officers, the concept of a trade is less tenable, membership is open to junior and senior staff, many of the latter in direct managerial roles. As a consequence the definitions of employer and employee, manager and managed are more blurred. It is also important to note that AUT has not got the long history of lobbying for employment rights and opportunities of many other employee organisations. Until the mid nineteen fifties the association was virtually a one man and one woman show operating for nearly thirty years from one room in Aberystwyth. Its catchment

of potential membership was small, as Archer (1979) points out," there were only 2,277 full-time teachers outside Oxbridge in 1919, fewer than 4,000 in 1939 and at its best it represented under 2,000 teachers in the 1930s. Its income was minute, its organisation amateurish and only at the outbreak of war did it breach the citadels of Oxbridge for membership. It "was only on the death of Douglas Laurie in 1953, who had nurtured the development of AUT for the previous thirty two years aided by the redoubtable Miss Davies, that a more professional organisation emerged" (Perkins 1969). Even then according to Perkins the increase in staff, the premises in London and the gradual increase in membership still left the role of AUT in the vital terms and conditions negotiations uncertain.

Even as recently as 1968 the carefully, reasoned arguments presented to the Prices and Incomes Board were largely ignored even though the outcome marked a radically different level of wage negotiation including important recommendations on probation and promotion issues. It is therefore important to note that the degree to which AUT is a vehicle for organised labour or whether it is closer to that of a consultative body is open to question. Whether the determination of government to remove the emphasis on national agreements and move towards local pay bargaining, already heralded by the introduction of elements of performance related pay, will impact on the role of AUT is open to debate. The effect of anti-trade union legislation in the 1980s suggests that it will not strengthen the collective arm of a traditionally powerless association. Discussions with University of Durham officers of AUT suggest that the impact of change as far as the Association is concerned is to increase the workload on negotiations focused on individuals negatively affected by change. This may include an interest in staff development for the member, if it is felt that she or he has not received sufficient help to meet the requirements.

As far as a national focus on staff development is concerned, the early role of AUT was centred primarily on defining the need for some training of academic staff in teaching skills. It has a long and, given the constraints in which it operates, a creditable history in lobbying for staff development but the degree to which it has been successful is open to debate. Although making a case for training provision in 1945, 1954 and 1961 to the CVCP it was still the case in 1965 that only three universities offered centrally organised courses (Main 1975). Of course one would need to examine the way the case was put and how far this was reflective of grass roots opinion in universities. The work of Matheson (1981) and the more recent of Smith and Smith (1993) on staff resistance suggests that the efficacy of AUT would not be *judged by its members* as to whether it had succeeded in making centralised training available.

As far as the universities of the time were concerned the 1972 picture is very different in that according to Main (1975), there was only one university which did not make such provision. The extent of training offered has to be questioned however because although Greenaway (1971) could assert that a considerable start had been made in offering training opportunities to staff, the development was uneven, mainly focussed on initial learning opportunities for new staff and not continuous. This is not surprising given the fact that Main (1975) pointed out that only six universities had full-time training personnel, whereas fifteen polytechnics had made such appointments. Although one should not discount the important influence of AUT being part of this development, it is misleading to see it spearheading major initiatives in this regard; rather it was more likely to be reactive to the pressure referred to above in regard to student and governmental demands for better teaching.

As far as the polytechnics of the time is concerned the change process was dramatic. In 1970 only 4 of the 29 engaged in centralised training of its staff. This figure increased to 22 by 1973/4 and were more likely to designate responsible individuals to pursue training policies. (Harding 1974). In the late 1960s Main (1975) testifies that plans for training were not ambitious, staff reactions were rather diffident, there was a great deal of reliance on outside experts in any programmes offered and there was virtually no exchange of information between universities. Over a decade later Greenaway and Harding (1978) argued on the basis of information provided by 46 universities and 20 polytechnics that "whatever the current views of what constitutes staff development, the main emphasis in training and development of academic staff in the last decade has been on providing - for staff new to institutions - an initial teaching methods course, an induction to the institution - and more recently, some degree of mentorship and support."

Possibly AUTs' major achievement in these early policy and practice developments was to participate in the Brynmor Jones Report (1965) and in the mounting of a conference in 1964 which led to the establishment of the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) an organisation whose research and publication record is impressive by any standards. This led to collaboration with SRHE in looking more closely at training needs, including a comprehensive survey of training provision, the results of which were published under the authorship of Greenaway in 1971, some of whose evidence is referred to above.

It is not the case therefore that AUT has ignored staff development issues even though these were fairly narrowly focused on training. Quite the reverse, in fact in the mid-sixties it recommended the establishment of a national staff college (Matheson 1981), to "function as a clearing house for ideas and information including teaching methods" (Greenaway and

Harding 1978). It advocated a pattern of training in 1969 not unlike that proposed by the CVCP in 1986 e.g. training for newcomers, the establishment of a number of training centres and the appointment of specialist staff. The fact that its role in securing training provision is more questionable and the rather modest way the case for training was presented, needs to be understood in terms of its structural position as a staff association. In order to understand this, one needs to empathise with those who are active in the association and the kind of issues that confronted them then and more crucially now in trying to respond collectively to policy about universities. It is possible to see this as arising from institutionalised individualism of the kind referred to above, professional protectiveness and from competing ideas of what a university system ought to be about.

It is worth briefly examining some of these early tensions in order to appreciate how, in a more hostile climate, and in spite of more recent co-operation with the ex-polytechnics' National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE). The AUT is a body which is constantly trying to balance the interests of a widely disparate community. Added to which government policy since the mid 1980s, far from generating solidarity, increases the potential for division. Division and strife are not new. If one simply takes the question of university expansion in the 1960s and 70s, it is evident from the minutes of several committees operating at headquarters level of AUT in the early 60s that the association was riven by dissent. This was primarily about the way the post-war and post-Robbins expansion in student numbers would be handled. Should all the growth in student numbers be met in the universities or in other institutions? (AUT Minutes. Nov 1962). In fact in one minute the degree to which expansion was viewed with suspicion was very clearly stated - "It is clear that AUT opinion is much more suspicious of and hostile to, expansion than

(the) Executive had assumed. Most replies said that the greater part of any expansion should take place in institutions other than universities"(AUT Minutes. Feb 1963).

Should one have more or bigger universities? Here again the dissension is clear " the Association had already shown itself to be deeply divided" - this between options which would have enlarged existing universities or alternatively created new ones (AUT Minutes. May 1964). Did more students inevitably mean lower standards or having to accept staff "unworthy" of becoming university teachers? (AUT Minutes 1.160 Feb 1963). The latter minute also indicates worry about the degree to which traditional methods could be protected in larger units?

All the above could be seen as perfectly legitimate questions to those anxious to protect an elitist higher education system. The significance for AUT as an organisation was that dissent around these questions made it more difficult to represent university staff *per se*. It is also the case that many of the responses to policy at this time were contradictory, making it harder to arrive at clear statements of intent. It is also evident that the debate was less about whether existing institutions could handle larger student numbers but more about whether they should. This is well signalled in the following AUT minute: "The general attitude to teaching methods is very flexible. Most are prepared to contemplate quite cheerfully very large lecture classes (300 with microphone and amplifier) provided tutorial groups of 8 or 9 are held." (AUT Minute 1.160 Feb. 1963). It was also evident that members of AUT were not adverse to the potential for expanded career opportunities presented by growth, particularly if the "more of the smaller universities" option was taken. "The advantages here were of close staff and student relations and, for the profession, a larger proportion of chairs and senior posts" (AUT Minute. May 1964).

It would be easy therefore to be critical of AUT in testing out in the decades following the Second World War the need for academic staff development, a term, which in any case only came into use in higher education in the early 1970s. "In 1976, it seems that the concept is still not widely recognised and understood." (Harding et al 1977). This needs however to be tempered by understanding the history of aggressive individualism of universities and the traditional preoccupation with autonomy and competition. The concept of a community of scholars can be seen in the same light as the emperors clothes when questions of inter - university status rears its head. Nor can it be said that these are outdated considerations; in fact the research selectivity exercises which determine resource and status can be seen to have fuelled internal division.

There is also an important psychological component that is worth considering in an association not too sure of its solidarity, in making too many waves about the need for training. This can be seen in a more recent stance of AUT on the subject of staff training in a policy document titled "The Professional Development and Training of University Teachers." (AUT 1982), although in practice it seems to be more about training courses than based on any wider concept of professional development. Unsurprisingly it is a child of its time, written in the wake of the decision by the CVCP not to abide by the recommendations of the Pitt Review Group (1980) which argued for a retention and expansion of the role of the Co - ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers (CCTUT). The CVCP decision to create instead a Committee for the Training of University Teachers, who would only meet from time to time and would have no academic resources or secretariat, was seen with justice, to be a move away from the earlier commitment to develop training opportunities.

The 1982 policy document of AUT is in many ways a very telling statement of what could be called the double bind of a representative organisation. First because it seems to be aimed as much at its own membership as to employers. Second that, although it is making clear - cut and quite radical recommendations, it creates "get-out clauses" along the way, particularly for staff. It is noted that "even the most limited facilities (for training) are undersubscribed" because of "institutional indifference, pedagogic scepticism and personal inhibition" and later states quite clearly that "university teachers, like other professions, should support programmes of staff development in order to improve the service they give to a changing society and hence to enhance both their own job satisfaction and the reputation of the profession." (AUT 1982) Hardly the response of an organisation secure in its membership support.

On the other hand it is clear that the document is aimed at employers, making the case that they should support staff training and development programmes in practical ways, by declaring support for training, making facilities available, allowing remission of teaching duties in order to attend, paying fees and travelling expenses to off site training courses etc. Possibly most crucial, is the need as seen by AUT to divorce training from any association with assessment and appraisal. There is "the suspicion that participation in training activities can expose members of staff to some form of covert and invalidated assessment. This concern is not entirely without foundation. It can only be allayed by an explicit disavowal by the institution".(AUT 1982). Similar worries about the way training could be used for assessment and appraisal have been voiced by the AUT Vice President Steve Ruhemann as recently as 1985.(AUT Bulletin March 1985).

The "get-out clauses" for employees are to some extent legitimated and illustrate well the double bind of an organisation that feels that staff development would be useful to its members but is not persuaded of its efficacy or how it would be used by employers. At no time is the question of training as a condition of employment addressed and therefore give tacit support for the voluntary principle upheld. It is also the case that argument is presented which more resistant staff could use to avoid opportunities available. In addition however, in the concern to divorce staff development from appraisal, the document makes several references to the shortcomings of training that does exist. These are mainly about the absence of a pedagogy of higher education and "the misconceived efforts to establish one are undoubtedly responsible for much of the indifference - even hostility - which some university teachers display when the subject of training is broached." Furthermore some of the training offered is questionable in that there has been "an excessive emphasis on "philosophy" and novel techniques as opposed to the "nuts and bolts" of teaching." (AUT 1982)

Why AUT should find it necessary to make these statements in a document that seems to be addressed to a varied audience can be understood only in terms of the ambivalence a representative organisation of this kind experiences in calling for staff development opportunities. In order to support the need for training one is in effect saying that there are gaps in provision, that practice needs to be improved and that development is necessary. This, from an organisation which is charged with making a case for improved remuneration and conditions. Trade unions and associations do lobby for training, but it is also important to recognise that they do so within the context of a labour market. Effective training often relies on the willingness of staff to examine critically their practice and to honestly seek improvement. Generating such a climate in situations of stress and threat is enormously

difficult and the recent pressures on higher education at a fiscal and performance level could be seen to actively work against this process.

This may well explain the impression gleaned from the writings of AUT that as an organisation it seems more confident in arguing for training in situations of job insecurity, both at the level of persuading its members of their best interests and in making employers more accountable for training. This was evident in 1974 when AUT was a key participant in establishing an agreement protecting staff in issues of probation. This in effect said that an employer who did not wish to confirm appointment after probation should be able to show "that training in university teaching had been made available" together with continuous advice and support. (Matheson 1981). It can also be seen that current interest by AUT in training is necessarily informed by government policy including appraisal systems and the spectre of compulsory redundancy.

### **The Role of Academic Researchers and Trainers.**

To assess the extent and type of demand for staff development from employees other than via AUT is even more testing. In some senses it is highly organised though in its earliest manifestations tangential. It stems from such bodies as the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) and the University of London Teaching Methods Unit both dominated by binary-divide universities. They collaborated with what was the polytechnic-dominated organisation originally the Standing Conference for Educational Services in Polytechnics (SCEDSIP), later the Standing Conference for Educational Development (SCED). Now reflecting the abolition of the binary divide, in conjunction with the staff development group of SRHE, into the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). Other influences are

highly individualised. Careers have obviously been based on an interest in staff training and development both in research and as trainers. The overall impression to be gleaned from most of the sources until the late 1980s however, suggests that the main focus is on teaching practice and in many areas of the work is more creative and wide-ranging than indicated in what might be called the rest of the training demand literature. It also illustrates that some of the rather modest requirements of employers, organised labour or even that of students in regard to training is narrow and rather sterile.

The following are examples which have been selected to demonstrate key elements in the range of thinking and practice evident in British higher education in the fifty years since the end of the 2nd World War. As such they range from ideas about how to use more effective ways of lecturing and conducting tutorials, theories of learning and how it is best facilitated to questions about the philosophy of higher education in post-industrial society and the consequent role of academic staff. More recent work focused on staff development has moved beyond the training agenda to the ways that also include continual staff support and evaluation. In an important sense the theory and practice of many employees interested in staff training and development is significantly more profound than from the other sources referred to above. It is also important to note at this stage that the use of the term demand within this context is something of a misnomer, in that everyone who is interested in the improvement of academic practice in higher education does not necessarily adopt a campaigning stance. Instead there is what could be called a research, sharing of insights and discussion of dilemmas, evident in much of the literature.

This in itself could and obviously does, to those who read it, contribute to the learning of staff. It is perhaps however more appropriate to start with an example of those who address the

issue of training in a direct way. No-one states the case more clearly than Truscott (1943) and, although it is tempting to argue that anyone writing so long ago about university teaching methods is no longer relevant, the evidence from student led campaigns of the 1960s and 1980s suggests only too clearly that he cannot be dismissed on the grounds of contemporary relevance. Writing mainly about skill or lack of it in the use of the lecture method he is scathing in his criticism of much of the practice. This is best encapsulated by the following - "it seems to be assumed in all universities that anyone with a First Class Honours degree and an inquiring mind is capable of lecturing and teaching - to say nothing of researching - without any sort of technical preparation. With the result that many lecturers are inaudible, talk with their backs to the audience, have a seeming inability to talk standing still, sit crouched over a desk with head in hand and appear to be disconcerted by a question." (Truscott 1943).

For Truscott there is only one effective remedy and that is to do a specific course of training. As far as he is concerned this should ideally be of one years duration, similar in kind to that of teachers generally with the added advantage in his view of providing a valuable break between university as a student and that of a lecturer. Failing this, the minimum requirement for efficiency should be a three-month, centrally organised course, possibly in London, purely of a technical nature. "The essential thing would be the practical examination at its close; no candidate ought to be accepted for any but a temporary post in a university until he (sic) had passed it".(Truscott 1943).

In a similar vein but of more recent origin, is the view of Sir Charles Carter (1980) who questions the degree to which the British university is ready to face the challenges of the next century. He is however quite clear that there is a need to develop more effective teaching

methods but feels that the form of training necessary is still unclear. Where he seems to share the same perspective of Truscott is in questioning why our society insists on training for teachers in schools but does not do so for university and other higher education staff. It is necessary he argues "that during the next twenty years, there should be much more serious research on the whole matter. This would make it possible to propose, with conviction, that those who teach in higher education should, like schoolteachers, be required to learn their trade".(Carter 1980).

On the other hand there is a lot of evidence to show that in many parts of the higher education system andragogical innovation is alive and kicking. Nor is this confined to the practice of teaching around the traditional methods of lecturing and tutorial work. There is a growing literature which defines a number of different models of the teaching/learning process which at its core is philosophical and political about attitudes and values of education, as well as scientific in its interest in the application of theories of learning and human motivation. Others approach the question of training more obliquely and teaching more directly; in the process they cast considerable light on the kind of androgical issues that might constitute a valuable component of staff development.

Many, including Walton(1972) and Bligh (1972), take the form of guidebooks to effective teaching - giving chapter and verse to the construction of a lecture, the handling of "difficult" student groups. Others such as Laing (1968) try to distinguish between types of lectures and the degree to which particular types predominate, given the subject. For example, that lecturers in literature and philosophy are typed as inspirational in that they try to generate enthusiasm for the subject, knowledge being a secondary aim whereas the majority of lecturers are didactic with the primary aim of conveying knowledge. In a similar vein Beard

Hartley (1984) have examined in their research, differences between academics in the way they approach the teaching task. Whilst making the general case that students "appreciate teaching from enthusiastic, warm and supportive tutors", they distinguish three types of approach to the teaching task. The academic geared to the reproduction of the next generation of academics, the liberal, more interested in the role of the university experience as character-building and the vocational, (vocational education and applied sciences) who see themselves as drilling students, emphasising mastery of a body of knowledge.

A more cynical approach to the question of the utility of some teaching methods in particular the lecture, is adopted by Meyer (1978) making a case for training in an inaugural lecture at the University of Cape Town. The prime function of the lecture method for Meyer is almost exclusively to the benefit of the lecturer in that it fulfils three essential functions - "it clears the mind, teaches him something and is a half way house to publication" (Meyer 1978). Others are interested in the sharing of educational insights and meet to share innovations in the use of technology as a teaching aid (Beug 1977), or are interested in how students can teach themselves and the implications this has for the tutor (Hills 1977), or focus on issues such as how higher education teaching can be made more effective and efficient (Piper 1979).

A somewhat different approach to is taken by Gibbs (1981) who is interested in types of learning and student motivation. He argues for example that a student-centred approach to learning is more effective in maintaining the motivation of students to learn and in helping them to develop a more in-depth understanding of the subject. Here he makes the case that giving students advice on how to study and learn has limited effectiveness and that teachers need to use methods which help students themselves understand how they learn best. His interests therefore are to provide teachers with the skills whereby they can help students to

understanding. At the core of this approach is a commitment to participation by the learner in how, as distinct from what, learning will take place. It is an approach that sets out from the beginning to engage the student in the process of learning. In this sense it is the antithesis of the remote lecturer entering a packed room, delivering the lecture, responding to the rare question and leaving the room. Gibbs' exercises, to be used by tutors are specifically designed to engage the student in how they learn and what barriers they must overcome to learn more effectively.

In this sense it is very compatible with the thinking and practice of Paulo Freire (1970) who argues that education must stem from the life experiences of the student and not from the teacher. It is also reflected in the recent interests expressed by Robertson (1994) in what he sees as a necessary paradigm shift in the way the educational process and content is pursued. In important ways it challenges the values placed on neutrality and objectivity which many academics reared in the Socratic tradition feel is vital in the search for truth.

It is in this area that Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) have conducted research geared to understanding what and how students learn. In particular, they are interested in the way the motivation of students can affect learning such as whether they have a personal commitment to the subject or see it as a means to an end. The major contribution they make to this part of the discussion being the awareness they cast of the significance of appropriate teaching in facilitating student learning. They distinguish two main types of learning, surface and deep and argue that the more a student is committed to the subject the greater tendency to deep learning. Student perceptions of what they are required to do are important in the process, "tasks which are perceived as requiring only reproduction, or on which the student is

mainly extrinsically motivated, increase the probability of a surface approach".(Entwistle and Ramsden (1983).

It is also argued that their research findings suggest significant differences in student motivation and perception between different academic disciplines. In the arts, students are more likely to attach personal meanings to the field of study and as such flourish when personal meaning is facilitated, whereas in the sciences and social sciences, students are more affected by the way information is pitched and the degree to which a tutor is alert to difficulties in handling the evidence.

Here again the question of differences between subject areas is raised. Entwistle and Ramsden are mainly interested in students and their learning but note that within the same academic discipline teaching can provide very different learning environments which affects student motivation and achievement. Differences between academic subject in regard to teaching and attitudes to training and educational research is however noted by Beard et al (1978) and they argue that it may have something to do with the intrinsic nature of a particular discipline. It is certainly the case according to Becher (1989) that academic subjects and their proponents can be seen in terms of tribal behaviour with profound cultural norms, idols and refers to what Taylor (1976) describes as "heroic myths" representing important "cultural capital"(Bourdieu 1979).

Others take on the issues of resistance to elements of staff development particularly in regard to educational theorising. Beard and colleagues (1978) point out that some disciplines in the sciences engender a different approach to theorising. So "biologists, doctors, dentists psychologists and specialists in education, .... are accustomed to experimenting on variable,

living organisms, than mathematicians, physicists, chemists and engineers, who handle or observe more predictable inanimate materials and symbols. What differences there are probably arise from basic differences in experience; some physical scientists consider experiments non-scientific if the conclusions can be stated only in terms of probabilities."(Beard et al 1978). This may well have some relevance to the distinctions made by Freire (1972) between those interested in education which involves the person and that which is based on what he calls a banking theory. This is rooted in a notion that the tutor knows everything and the student nothing. Freire argues that tutors who share this approach to education will "react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates critical faculties and is not content with a partial view of reality". Although Freire is not in any way connecting these differences to subject area, for the purposes of this discussion such disparities of approach to knowledge and learning will have implications for how training to facilitate learning is viewed.

The fact that teaching methods and learning opportunities differ between academic subjects is well demonstrated in the literature. The emphasis found by Ramsden (1979) on class work in pure and applied sciences as compared with preparation for tutorials and seminars in art and social science subjects is but one example. The importance here would appear to be the significance this places on ensuring that any staff training and development is subject relevant as well as providing opportunities for a critical appraisal of different custom and practice across disciplines. It therefore seems to be the case if one marries the work of Beard et al, Entwistle and Ramsden and Becher there are variations in student motivation to learning and these appear to have some relevance to subject selection and learning experience and that tutors can also be expected to vary in their willingness to explore andragogical issues dependent on subject.

Nor can there be any dispute from the evidence as defined by Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) that "the attitudes and enthusiasm of a lecturer, his (sic) concern for helping students to understand the difficulties experienced by students in dealing with a new topic, are all likely to affect...approaches and attitudes to study". Furthermore, although they recognise that there is no ideal blueprint or magic training programme for the university teacher they are clearly advocating training and staff development programmes to help staff understand and develop more effective teaching situations and appropriate assessment methods in order to facilitate student learning at the deepest level. In comparing their own research into learning and how it is facilitated they point out that - "it is sadly true that disturbing conclusions reached by researchers and other commentators on higher education during the last hundred years or so are confirmed in our findings. The evidence is overwhelming that the quality of student learning is adversely affected by inappropriate assessment methods, poor teaching, and the lack of freedom of some courses" (Entwistle and Ramsden 1983).

The significance of these examples is to demonstrate that the state of the art of andragogical discourse and research among individual academics interested in the subject is in many ways far in advance of that evidenced in the demand for training from employers, organised employee opinion and students. The time allocations recommended for training by the latter group, plus the voluntary nature of the involvement of staff carries with it clear messages that anything more than a few technical guidelines on using the lecture, seminar and tutorial more effectively is not on the agenda. It also seems to be the case that the time allocations inevitably minimise the opportunities for practice-based learning in any depth and as such could probably be as effectively covered with a good reading list. There is

no shortage of material some of which is very detailed and comprehensive, for example the work of Walton (1972), Bligh (1971), Millar (1976), Cockburn et al(1979).

In the late 1980s and more so in the mid 1990s one can see a more coherent role for academics in issues of staff development. This is manifested in a variety of ways but the most accessible can be seen in relation to the activities initially sponsored by the CVCP through the Universities' Staff Development and Training Unit (USDTU), later to be the Universities Staff Development Unit (USDU) and now in its latest manifestation as the United Kingdom Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency (UK UCoSDA). In a similar vein but with a significantly different provenance is the organisation which is now called the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). In both of these forums, academics are active in research and publication in the furtherance of staff development.

This can take a variety of forms, for example the case of USDU later UCoSDA in setting up a range of Task Forces to investigate the supply and demand for staff development for leaders and managers (USDU 1994), for teaching and learning (USDU 1994), specifically for research (USDU 1994), for allied and support staff (USDU 1994) and for continuing professional development (UCoSDA 1994). Another example is in compiling and publishing information on the national picture of staff development provision (USDTU 1990) development. All of these developments have involved a range of academic staff interested in furthering debate and practice in staff development. In the case of SEDA which stems from the activities of individual and consortia of academics, originally "a loosely knit informal network of practitioners to its current status as a focus of activity in the field of educational development in Higher Education" (SEDA 1994). This organisation is primarily an information and skill

exchange body through conferences, short-courses, consultations and publication. Academics are central to its organisation and production.

The conclusions that one can reach are that academics either individually or collectively have not been sluggards in addressing issues of staff development. On the other hand one cannot detect an overall professional commitment to centralised, non - subject specific, staff development. This is due to a combination of factors of which the following appear to be central:-

- a. A culture which emphasises individual achievement particularly in regard to research and scholarship and that preparation for these roles is inherent in training prior to appointment.
- b. A culture which supports ideas that subject knowledge confers facility in dissemination.
- c. A culture that emphasises autonomy and freedom.
- d. Location within subject specific departments and faculties with a concern for subject maintenance.
- e. Suspicion (probably well founded) of corporate agendas argued for in a climate of retrenchment, lack of trust and control.

These factors are well known and are essentially related to ideas of the university. These include the centrality of subject specialism in its organisation and relative autonomy and freedom in how a particular university operates. Ideas that although manifested in different ways over time, within and across national boundaries, still contain sufficient commonalities to impact on change agendas designed to increase the role of the state in decision making.

The work of Becher (1989) assists in understanding the complex processes which reinforce the dominance of subject and the socialisation process of new members. The work of Halsey (1992) among others, assists in understanding that current debates about the form, content and function of higher learning are not new either nationally or internationally. That the debates are at heart about elitism versus expansionism, teaching versus research and the degree to which instrumentalism to the definitions of the state and other powerful forces should hold sway. The work of Teather (1979) and others helps in the understanding that these debates and their impact on staff development are international in character even though the degree to which they are manifested differs within and between societies.

It is possible therefore to see the demands for staff development referred to above as indicative of a new trend in instrumentalism and it is to these we now turn. The first focus is on how the calls for staff development have been realised and then to explore how these impact on the experience of academic staff.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROVISION.**

It is argued above that since the 2nd World War there has emerged an increasingly influential lobby for formalised staff development for academic (and other) staff. It is evident that the success of the lobby has waxed and waned dependent on the degree to which universities are seen in some way as problematic. In the late 1960s and early 70s influenced by university expansion and student unrest and from the mid 1980s about expansion in student numbers, economic functionality, societal accountability and the shape and form of resource allocation. This has been accompanied with a call to challenge the culture of academic life which is seen as a barrier to economic accountability and functionality and a bulwark against change.

Furthermore, these challenges have not stemmed solely from the political right but are also evident from those who seek to challenge the elitism and gatekeeping barriers which limit access to higher education. It is further argued that these trends run counter to the structure of academic disciplines and the relative autonomy they have enjoyed in how they define their function and utilisation of resources. Nor are these issues a purely British phenomenon but evident internationally. One of the mechanisms for change has been a growing interest in employer-led staff development and this chapter focussed on how it is being realised. This will be conducted in two ways, the first looking at the evidence which illuminates the national scene, the second, in exploring in a limited number of universities, the policies, practices and how they are received by the staff affected.

Trying to understand the provision of staff development opportunities in British universities of the mid 1990s is no easy task. In fact a good case could be made that it is an impossible one given the highly individualised nature of each institution, the differing cultures, histories and processes, not least in the variation in how staff development is defined and carried out. To add to the problem, attempts to seek information run up against problems of comparison because of the idiosyncratic methods of data collection in each institution and the discourse in which it is communicated to a wider public.

There are a number of key issues which illustrate the nature of the problem:-

- a) the absence of any agreed policy of what constitutes staff development in higher education.
- b) the fact that employer-led staff development is contextually bound to the institution within which it operates. This is generated and reinforced by the fact that universities take pride in their uniqueness, making it difficult to define a collective policy and practice or to undertake effective comparison.
- c) the apparent ebb and flow of interest in a systematic approach to staff development by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals is an important factor. The lack of clarity in the role of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics prior<sup>to</sup> its integration with the CVCP in 1992 and the lack of shared objectives, is important in understanding differences in the way development has taken place in the ex-polytechnic universities.
- d) historical differences in approaches to staff development between the two wings of the binary divide arising out of differences in the structural position of the polytechnics and

the then universities. This has resulted in considerable variation in the way staff development is defined, resourced and structurally located.

- e) the overwhelming emphasis of staff development programmes and practice-based research, on the teaching and learning function.

As stated earlier it needs to be acknowledged that there is no widely accepted agreement in higher education about what constitutes staff development, the circumstances in which it should operate both in terms of its structural manifestation within an institution or in detailed terms about its content. This means that each institutions defines what will constitute staff development, how it is organised and how it is resourced. The attempts of organisations such as the Standing Conference on Educational Staff Development (SCED later SEDA) to encourage institutions to locate the process into a nationally recognised accreditation scheme has not been an overwhelming success. Institutions who apply the practices which would lead to an Investment in People Award are few and far between.

Nor would it necessarily make sense for every university to have completely identical staff development programme. Each university is unique, with some development needs that are institutionally specific. There is however a strong case to be made for some uniformity across the system both at the level of policy, minimal resource level and practice. For example, in policies about newly appointed staff and their minimum needs in order to undertake the roles required of them; whether they are required as part of their terms and conditions of employment to do an initial course in teacher training and whether this should be conducted in a way which would facilitate national accreditation and transfer. Policy and practice of appraisal could also lend itself to some kind of national policy. At the moment even a cursory

examination of the staff development literature provides sufficient material to empathise with the view that:-

"staff development generally is still at a primitive and uneven state of advancement... Staff development really is a jungle. To pursue the analogy, there is plenty of good work going on in isolated clearings, much discovery taking place (and rediscovery as people come across old tracks) - and many tiger traps for the unwary traveller." (Smith and Smith 1993). This chapter therefore is an attempt to identify the salient features of the jungle, to account for its condition and to avoid the tiger traps as much as possible.

In considering employer-generated staff development provision for British academics in the mid 1990s, it is necessary to acknowledge the problematic nature of what has been defined earlier as inherent staff development. This is the range of activities that all academics to a larger or lesser degree engage in, as part of the process of being an academic. The maintenance and extension of ones subject knowledge either through scholarship or research; the dissemination of insights through publication or contributions at conferences, the use of sabbaticals etc. To which can be added the learning gained through serving on various policy and administrative committees or through external examining duties. The opportunities for learning are endless and institutionalised in the idea of academic life.

More importantly for staff development agendas, in spite of the introduction of appraisal systems it is largely unacknowledged, not monitored and not centrally accountable in a formal sense unless a member of staff is so incompetent that her or his future employment is in question. It is in effect a taken for granted process, the significance of which is not sufficiently acknowledged in the staff development literature although there are signs that the more recent

deliberations of the CVCP Staff Development Unit (USDU June 1994) is beginning to make a case for a wider acknowledgement of the range of activities that can be embraced in staff development. This is vital if only because it represents considerable personal and institutional investment little of which is costed or credited as staff development.

How then can we understand the provision of staff development in British universities in the mid 1990s? One approach is to examine the way issues are defined at a national level and the degree to which there are organisations which can influence provision and then to examine what issues are evident at individual university level. This inevitably means that one is addressing provision at a level of generality although it will be argued that in spite of this, one can see key trends not only in what is provided but also in the demands for a more coherent and universally acknowledged system. There are a number of organisations influencing the provision of staff development, one of those likely to gain in importance is the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) established by the CVCP in 1992 as a means of forestalling government concerns about quality assurance.

In many senses it has assumed the mantle of the now defunct Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) and the role that it performed in monitoring standards in what was public sector higher education. It is a company limited by guarantee and has three subdivisions, Quality Audit, Quality Enhancement and Credit and Access. The first, which continues the work of what was the CVCP Academic Audit Division includes university and college representation, 40% lay membership and has an independent chairperson. Its role is to monitor quality assurance methods within degree awarding institutions throughout the United Kingdom and to also check how far the stated objectives of the institution is matched with what is provided. Its impact on staff development is signalled by its guidelines on quality assurance

produced in 1994 in which it states that "the development and training of all types of staff at all stages of their career plays a major role in quality enhancement"(HEQC 1994). Furthermore it lists a number of priorities which include induction coupled with a mentor system for inexperienced staff, updating in teaching skills for experienced staff particularly in ways to teach large classes, assistance for non-permanent staff in their role in student learning, management training and marketing etc.

The national organisation which is most in evidence in continuing to carry the staff development banner aided by the role of the HEQC is the staff development organisation now partly sponsored by the CVCP - the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency (UCoSDA), until recently the UK Universities Staff Development Unit (USDU) and before that the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers (CCTUT). A brief foray into the emergence of this organisation is necessary in order to understand the complexity of its current role and reinforces some of the earlier discussion on employer demand. As a response to the demands for the training of university teachers in the late 1960s and 70s not least from the University Grants Committee (UGC) the CVCP set up the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers (CCTUT) which included representation from the UGC, AUT and NUS to "keep the training needs of university teachers under continuous review"(Matheson 1981). On receipt of funding from the UGC the CVCP appointed a co-ordinating and research officer in 1973 to collate information, stimulate thinking about the training needs of academic staff and to organise national and regional events. It must be borne in mind that here one is referring to the 45 universities which represented part of the binary higher education system.

When the UGC funding for CCTUT came to an end in 1975 the CVCP assumed funding responsibility, based on a levy from each institution and in the latter part of 1978 sponsored the Pitt Review Group on the Training of University Teachers which reported in 1980. The role of CVCP is ambiguous at this time, first in setting up the review group and then ignoring its findings and recommendations in spite of the objections of many academics and AUT and NUS. The Pitt Review recommendations included a strengthened committee, increased budget and the appointment of more staff. Instead it was decided to establish a new committee, the Committee on the Training of University Teachers (CTUT) without any budget or staff "to meet from time to time to review the current provision of training of university teachers and to ensure that universities are aware of the provision" (Matheson 1981).

The underlying assumption of the CVCP was that staff training, as it was then defined would be pursued by individual universities, meeting on a regional basis as the need arose. This thinking ruled the next few years until, in 1987 the CVCP, responding to the corporate agendas outlined earlier, not least the introduction of appraisal systems, produced a code of practice on academic staff training. The draft document produced in 1986 was seen as a half hearted response by AUT which argued that "the code falls far short of the substantial initiative in this field that AUT would like to see ....its tone is tentative, its content rather bland...the danger is....that the subject with which it deals will be easily ignored" (AUT 1986). The final document was also couched in tentative terms, for example, "it is suggested that each institutions should have one (an Academic Staff Training Committee) .. consideration might also be given to setting up informal interest groups.....university teachers should be free to choose...but...all have responsibility to themselves, their profession and to their institutions.." (CVCP 1987). In 1989, again stimulated by pump-priming money from the UGC the CVCP set up the UK Universities Training and Staff Development Unit (USTDU), the "T"

being discreetly dropped in 1992 to reflect the growing emphasis on development as distinct from training.

The main functions of the unit include, the promotion of the crucial role of staff development for all staff in higher education, advice on strategic and operational planning, support for local staff development co-ordinators and to act as a central co-ordinating agency. A range of tasks which "in the view of many staff developers it was faced with a well nigh impossible task from the outset - to provide a very extensive service with strictly limited resources." (Smith and Smith 1993).

To understand the extent of the commitment of CVCP as an organisation, it is necessary to examine their role in the funding of the unit. After the period when total funding of the unit was assumed by the UGC (later the Universities Funding Council - UFC) and a period of shared funding from UFC, CVCP and the income generation activities of the unit staff, the CVCP has now taken a step back from the arena. This can be seen in the current funding arrangements in which USDU (now UCoSDA) operates. It must now seek its funding from annual membership fees by participating universities and by undertaking training and research contracts. To reflect the removal of the binary divide and to widen its catchment (and its potential fee income) it now includes colleges as well as universities, and this is reflected in the change of name to that of the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency..

The dilemma for the unit now is that whilst it is an agency of the CVCP which provides from its membership the chairperson of the agency, with implications for some degree of authority and permanence, in effect it has no guaranteed income. It relies on the annual membership of participating universities and colleges any of which could theoretically, by failing to renew



membership, jeopardise the whole operation. In effect it now has to engage in a delicate balancing act in proving its worth to funding bodies whilst making sure it contributes to the support needs of staff development work - "it will be difficult to maintain a balance of effort between these two activities." (Smith and Smith 1993).

It could also be argued that the current funding arrangements only add to the delicacy of its task. Being an employer-generated body it must always steer a careful path between employer and employee interests and this is reflected in some of its publications. If one considers the publication making a case for a more "coherent and comprehensive approach" to staff development (USDU 1994) one can see a number of barely concealed agendas at work. First, by its very title it is saying that at the moment there is not a widespread approach that is coherent and comprehensive. Furthermore the publication concentrates on providing examples of what it defines as good practice but makes no attempt to indicate the degree to which practice is, or is not developed. Yet, this is the one agency that has access to the most comprehensive information of what is provided and the difficulties that are being encountered in furthering the interests of staff development.

The idea that one should be in the business of persuasion and that as a central agency there are inevitably important issues of confidentiality is not disputed. The agency is dependent for its survival on the goodwill of subscribing institutions and its sponsoring body the CVCP, the political acumen of its director acknowledged by Smith and Smith (1993) and must in part refer to the balancing act between the vested interests of particular institutions and the need to focus on national issues in staff development. The problem lies in trying to understand the degree to which staff development policies and practices are operating across the system and whether it is better that this information be kept "in-house". Two recent attempts have been

made to try to gauge the extent of provision, the first in 1990 by the then USDTU (CVCP 1990), the second on 1993 in the production of a guide to stated staff development provision in 201 institutions comprising universities including ex-polytechnics and other colleges.(Smith and Smith 1993).

The first, a report compiled by Peter Guildford for USDTU (1990) and based on the binary divide universities, notes that since the Jarratt Report in 1985 and the introduction of appraisal systems there has been an increase in staff development provision, but it is extremely variable and "much of this growth has not been overtly planned, provision for other staff groups is limited and the total picture is a proliferation of courses, groups and networks, ad hoc arrangements and varying degrees of institutional support" (Guildford 1990). Furthermore, training and staff development is seen by many universities as a marginal activity and not fully integrated into institutional plans. The survey of Brown and Atkins (1986) involving the personnel responsible for staff development reported widespread resistance by academics particularly senior staff. Where staff development plans are more integrated into planning, there are a number of factors which are of significance. These include a demonstrable commitment by the Vice-Chancellor and other senior officers with a named pro-vice chancellor having institutional responsibility; where there is a staff development policy communicated to all staff; the appointment of staff with sufficient time and seniority to execute the functions and make an effective contribution and a strategy for the implementation of staff development.(USDTU 1990)

Few institutions had a coherent policy and the means to implement it, very few had an adequate way of costing staff development. Some funded activities centrally, departmentally or a mixture of the two, no account was taken of salaries, opportunity costs or hidden subsidies.

Some institutions applied a notional cost per head but one which did not compare in any shape or form to the investment in commercial organisations, which tend to have investment levels in staff development of upwards of 1% of salary bills. An added factor is that the trends to decentralise to budget centres work against the idea of centrally, resourced provision. (USDTU 1990) All of which to the advocates of staff development, presents a gloomy picture. On the other hand, if there were mechanisms in place to adequately cost not only the acknowledged staff development programmes particularly in terms of opportunity costs and hidden subsidy and what is described above as inherent staff development, the picture as far as funding is concerned might look very different. There appears according to Guildford's survey of a selected 24 universities, a very wide range of institutional practices in how staff development is administered and resourced and this is reflected in the wide range of programmes both in terms of content, duration and level. Some institutions at the time of the survey offered no in-house courses, others offer a wide range. In terms of length, one fifth were short events in the lunch time or evening, the bulk lasted half a day to one day and twenty two percent lasted for more than a day. The following graphs summarise the findings:-

| No. of topics offered over 1 year | No. of Universities | %            | Length of Course. | %    |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|------|
| 0                                 | 3                   | 12.5         | Lunchtime/evening | 22.0 |
| 1-10                              | 6                   | 25.0         | 1 - 1½ days       | 31.0 |
| 11-20                             | 6                   | 25.0         | 1/2 days          | 28.0 |
| 21-30                             | 4                   | 16.7         | More than one day | 19.0 |
| 31-40                             | 2                   | 8.3          |                   |      |
| over 40                           | 3                   | 12.5         |                   |      |
| <u>Total</u>                      | <u>24</u>           | <u>100.0</u> |                   |      |

Source: Staff Development Provision in the Universities of the United Kingdom. compiled by P. Guildford for the USDTU. (CVCP 1990).

Finally, the report lists a number of recommendations, the key elements of which are about the need for a strategic plan for all staff, commitment of senior management, specific staff resources with executive power and separate accommodation for staff development activities, programmes to match needs, a clear and expressive link between appraisal and staff development and where possible a separate budget. (CVCP 1990). In many senses the Guildford survey reflects those of Greenaway (1971) in regard to the then universities, Harding (1974) in regard to the then polytechnics, Greenaway and Harding (1978) in regard to the then universities and polytechnics and Matheson (1981) in an extensive survey of binary divide universities as the retiring officer of the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers (CCTUT).

Before examining the implications of the above to the structural issues of staff development provision, there is a need to explore a little further the similarities and differences in provision particularly between the wings of the ex-binary divide. Although some of the discussion above has included the higher education system in general it needs to be borne in mind that it is heavily weighted towards the evidence about the universities prior to the abolition of the binary divide. How far is this applicable to the ex-polytechnics given their different function in the higher education system? This is particularly important in order to make sense of the research information which is to follow, conducted in 5 post "binary divide" universities, 3 of which are ex-polytechnics.

Again the evidence is less than complete and it is necessary to acknowledge the wide variations in policy and practice between institutions. It is also the case that although from 1970 there existed the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP) which attempted to emulate the functions of the CVCP and had a training unit, it did not compare in terms of authority and organisation with the CVCP. This is quite understandable, the CVCP formed in 1918 had a central role in negotiating at a national level about funding and higher education policy but this was less so for the CDP, whose major funding and policy constituency was channelled through local authorities and the various interests represented on governing bodies.

The evidence about staff development is therefore sketchy but there are a number of sources which suggest, a similarly idiosyncratic form of policy and practice to that of the "older" universities but with some significant differences. It has already been stated that according to Greenaway and Harding (1978) staff development in polytechnics emerged from a "bottom up" movement of academics, not least from the Standing Conference on Educational Development Services in Polytechnics (SCEDSIP) which was founded in 1974 by interested academics arguing for training opportunities for staff. Conversely the overall trend in the universities of the time, was a more "top down" process. According to Harding (1974) the polytechnics, "born in a period of growing concern for the effectiveness and relevance of higher education.....and charged with the task of being primarily teaching institutions equal in status to the universities, but distinctive", responded to the drive for a polytechnic identity and status by providing centralised support services with particular attention to induction and teaching methods. Nor is this surprising, bearing in mind that many of the polytechnics were created from amalgamations of previously separate colleges, consequently the need to establish some kind of common bench mark to practice would be strong.

It is also the case that in many senses the polytechnics were engaged in teaching a more diverse constituency and in a variety of formats. Writing in 1979 David Bethal the then chairperson of the CDP pointed out that "unlike the traditional intake of many higher education institutions, students on full time and sandwich courses in polytechnics are not dominated by recent school leavers nor anything like so homogeneous in their age distribution. All told the ...students...constitute an extremely diverse group".

The survey of 29 polytechnics by Harding (1974) in the academic year 1972/3 not only demonstrates a growing interest but a rapid expansion of staff development opportunities. For example, prior to 1970 only 4 of the 29 engaged in staff training whereas in 1972/3 22 of the 29 provided internal courses. It could be that in spite of or because of the bottom up process described by Harding, one of the springboards for this growth of activity could well be the formation of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics. It was at this time that the CVCP was in receipt of earmarked grant aid of £16,000 over two years from the UGC to fund the appointment of a national co-ordinating officer to the Co-ordinating Committee on the Training of University Teachers (Matheson 1981).

The ever present comparisons between the two wings of higher education must have acted as spur. Furthermore, the CDP were not united in their aims and objectives "many well known polytechnic directors...were not only unsympathetic to binary policy but were out to destroy it".(Pratt and Burgess 1974). One of the bones of contention being the desire by some polytechnic directors to have charters and the power to award their own degrees. There were also problems about the status of CDP as an organisation. The CVCP could be an effective pressure group in regard to funding and autonomy, whereas many polytechnic directors were caught up in a complex authority position. On the one hand many had a history of being reared

in a more authoritarian climate within their institutions prior to amalgamation with other colleges into polytechnics than that which pertained to university vice chancellors of the time. At the same time they were subservient and accountable to local authorities.(Pratt and Burgess 1974). Consequently, those who wished to demonstrate that polytechnics were not second class universities but a genuine alternative to higher learning and those who wished, as soon as possible to abolish the binary divide and be redesignated as universities could all have had interest in developing staff, spurred on by competition with the supposed higher status, and undoubted greater autonomy of the universities of the time.

An example of this process from among those who sought to establish the distinctiveness of the polytechnics can be seen in the a cri de coeur by A.M. Smith then in 1974 the Chairman of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics. It embodied a vision of the staffing requirements for a distinctive sector of the higher education system " what is needed is the development of characteristic staff for polytechnics, not imitative of university staffs, but characteristic of polytechnics in their own right. They would ...be equipped more appropriately by outlook and experience for the polytechnic pattern of scholarship and education....confident that their prospects and conditions matched their responsibilities." (CDP 1974).

It is not therefore possible to define a unified staff development policy in the polytechnics anymore than one could do in the universities but there are difference that can be detected. Drawing on the survey of university staff development by Greenaway (1971) Harding (1974) draws a number of distinctions emerge, first that the structure of training that emerged in the polytechnics is different in duration, pattern and content from that reported by many universities in the Greenaway study. The polytechnics were more likely to see the short concentrated course at the beginning of an academic career as a pre-cursor to subsequent in-

service training and that "although it is difficult to draw comparisons because there is no detailed analysis of the university programmes in the 1971 survey it does appear that polytechnics develop courses to include more than teaching methods techniques". Furthermore, they are more likely to appoint staff specifically to take responsibility for staff development - 14 of the 29 polytechnics surveyed had such appointments. (Harding 1974).

In 1978 Greenaway and Harding combined to undertake research of staff development policies and practices in polytechnics and universities. The results refer to information from 20 polytechnics and 46 universities and colleges and a significant growth of activity was reported in both sectors since their earlier surveys. They note a number of structural differences between polytechnic and university staff; the former as new institutions, albeit based on many older institutions, had to work on getting established and this included large numbers of new staff.

It also needs to be borne in mind that at this time probation was not strongly institutionalised in the polytechnics and this would add to pressure to ensure that staff training needs were identified and acted on. They point to the preferential salary structure and working conditions of university staff at that time; differences in qualifications were noted, with university staff more likely to hold doctorates and in general "the quality of staff was thought to be lower in the polytechnics" (Greenaway and Harding 1978).

The impact of this, being that the training needs of polytechnic staff were more associated with upgrading qualifications. In fact in 1989 it was noted that "in one polytechnic, 52% of staff development activity is devoted to the enhancement of academic or professional qualifications, 20% to research, 16% to professional and industrial updating and 12% to the improvement of teaching skills" (HMI 1989). There were however other pressures, not least the role of CNA

and HMI, the former because of its concern about the quality of staff as well as the merits of particular courses and the inspectorial function of HMI. There was also a head of steam building for polytechnics to also undertake research (CNAA 1973).

In 1989, the HMI report "The English Polytechnic - an HMI Commentary" noted a number of issues impacting on staff development provision in polytechnics. They note that up to 10% of teaching is done by part-time staff who are not always included in staff development programmes, that induction courses are usually provided but are of variable length and quality. It is recommended that more should be done to identify institutional, course and individual needs, to improve staff development arrangements, to monitor the outcomes of staff development activity particularly in providing appropriate appraisal systems. It would therefore appear that there are differences both between the "older" universities and the ex-polytechnics and between individual institutions in both sectors. As far as one can generalise from the evidence referred to above, it would appear that the ex-polytechnics are more likely to resource more staff development activity centrally and that this is likely to be less "one off" in character - but, there are wide variations in provision. That staff development geared to the upgrading of qualifications is more likely to be a concern in the ex-polytechnics coupled with a focus on the teaching function. There is no indication however in either sectors of the old binary divide, of a widespread systematic approach to staff development and a lot of evidence that each institution determines its own priorities and matters of resource.

The survey conducted by Smith and Smith (1993) funded by the SRHE Staff Development Group and the now defunct Committee of Directors of Polytechnics although helpful in casting its net across the whole higher education system, only serves to illuminate the diverse ways that staff development is described, resourced and practised. The description of the

"system" as a jungle in the title of the publication seems most apt. It does however serve to highlight some central issues that need to be taken into account in understanding the way diversity can make the analysis of staff development provision extremely problematic. These are:-

1. the lack of clarity in the definition of staff development.
2. problems in defining institutional staff development policy.
3. issues arising from the structural position of staff development personnel.

### **Defining Staff Development:**

In considering the demand for and provision of staff development is the problem of definition. The issues outlined above have centred on opportunities provided by employers and labelled as development or training. As indicated above this does not take into account all the other forms of development that academics are engaged in as part of the process of academic enquiry and transmission. Consequently, although one can argue with justification that there is no clear-cut policy of staff development in British universities, that takes into account all the varying modes of development experienced; nor it is it costed and monitored in a way which would further debate and scrutiny, there is an increase in the activity which could be embraced by the label.

The term staff development has grown in favour during the 1980s from the previous designation of training. It was argued by Matheson (1981) that to move away from the concept of training to one of development would not only serve to overcome resistance to the negative connotations embraced in the use of training but would also facilitate a wider definition of what is embraced in the term development. He further argued that staff development can be viewed in two different ways:-

1. "as a process...taken individually or as an entire profession...(it) may be planned or random, controlled or accidental, contrived or unwitting, organised or spontaneous...craved after or unwished for. Used in this way..(it)..has ontogenic connations - it refers to the entire sequence of events involved in the professional development of a member of staff."
  
2. one that "has its origins in the activity of staff training, that is in a conscious institutional process intended to improve the capability of staff to fulfil specific roles particularly in relation to *teaching*. Thus only selected bits of ontogenic staff development are actually labelled staff development." (Matheson 1981)

This distinction is important in the development of policy particularly in regard to which activities are or are not credited. There is increasing demand that appraisal systems should be tied in to staff development strategies which would embrace more of the ontogenic approaches though with possibly less emphasis on the randomness included in the term. This approach is most noticeable from UCoSDA (1994) making a case for policies which facilitate continuous professional development, where it is argued that "staff appraisal, well understood, sensitively and systematically used and managed thoroughly at all stages...could enhance staff development activity greatly within departments. The departments could then take responsibility....for analysing...development needs of individuals and the departmental staff as a whole. Such a model puts the major responsibility for determining the methods and approaches of professional development in the very place to which the majority of staff feel the greatest loyalty - their department."

If, however, staff development was defined in this way many of the problems surrounding appraisal would have to be overcome. Given that most appraisal systems are hierarchical and that in theory it is supposed to be a two-way process which "should be taken in an atmosphere of trust" (Smith and Smith 1993) one does not need an extensive imagination to see how the new managerialism could get in the way of honest, open and developmental sharing. At the moment it is difficult to see any connection between appraisal and staff development in the systemic sense. How staff find themselves involved in staff development processes in the narrow definition of the term is still heavily dependent on local policies and even then, open to interpretation. At the moment however, one would be hard put to arrive at a definition of staff development which would command widespread recognition and would take into account all, or even the main ways that universities facilitate the growth of their academic staff.

### **Institutional Policies.**

A considerable amount of the responsibility for the lack of definition and the sheer variability in provision is in the absence of a widely agreed range of policies which would facilitate coherence within and between institutions about minimum standards of staff development investment and activity. Some institutions have extensive programmes allied to clear policies, others the bare minimum, nor does this appear to be related to a consistent analysis of need but more due to the personalities of key individuals or responses to particular crisis, such as negative assessments at a stage in the institutions' development.

There also seems to be some disparity between institutional rhetoric and what is really happening. This is not surprising, higher education works in the political marketplace and the political agendas outlined in Chapter 1 do not lend support for open and honest sharing. What could be called natural institutional defensiveness, not washing the dirty linen etc. has been

compounded by the deliberate attempts of government to foster inter - institutional competition. In addition the process whereby doubts are raised about effectiveness and quality, which whether deliberate or not, serves to undermine confidence and trust. As pointed out by Smith and Smith (1993) "there are strong government pressures on institutions to take staff development and training seriously and to demonstrate commitment in this area. What better way to do this than to reflect back pious statements in the same language?".

It is true that all institutions now have mission statements which include references to staff development but it is important that these be seen as much if not more, as political documents and may not bear much relevance to the grist of university activity. Some examples of this will be explored later in regard to the research undertaken in universities in the North East Region in 1994. These include institutional policies that appear to be very comprehensive and clear cut, for example universities who subscribe to the Investors in People Award Scheme and as such are subject to a comprehensive policy, externally monitored, which embraces all staff as well as academics. Yet even in this regard there appears to be questions about the extent that it embodies consistent policies and practices.

Some institutions have introduced policies that have implications for the terms and conditions of staff particularly about compulsory involvement in initial teacher training for newly appointed staff. There is however, evidence which suggests that the degree to which these are firmly bedded in custom and practice is less clear cut. There are clues that can be gained about the degree to which institutions have staff development policies and the form that this takes in practice, from looking at resources and the structural position of staff development personnel. These may in effect tell more about institutional policy and practice than the mission statements and formally written policies suggest.

One way that this relationship between policy and resources has been conceived which seems to offer the most valuable way of categorising such a wide range of policies and practices is presented by the UK Universities' Staff Development Unit (USDU Paper No.8 1994). Here they attempt to classify phases in institutional staff development in terms of the "embryonic", the "established" and the "emergent". To paraphrase, the embryonic is focused mainly on voluntary induction courses for enthusiasts, no earmarked budget and no clearly defined policy or management group directly responsible for staff development; the established where a unit, service or centre is established with at least one staff development co-ordinator in post. Where there is a policy, a committee, an annual programme of events and an identifiable budget. In this sense it conforms to the CVCP Code of Practice on Academic Staff Training (CVCP 1987).

The third, the "emergent" is one where the university recognises the need to go beyond voluntary involvement, a course for newly appointed staff is mandatory; structured opportunities for other staff; remission from teaching duties for participants, provision of a mentor who has received training; senior management who are knowledgeable and give explicit support and where there is integration between staff development, course review and appraisal. Furthermore, "where there are strong links between the university's policies for staff development and teaching, and between these policies and the university's mission and objectives".(USDU No.8 1994). An extract from the document which provides a full list of the components of these three phases can be found in Appendix. 1.

Clearly what underpins many of these phases are varying degrees of institutional understanding, commitment and policy. It is also clear that although it is a helpful classification

in sorting out the plethora of practice into key elements, within any of the phases is wide variation of practice. For example, in the five universities in the North East Region there are policies and practices that can be located in the second and third phase, some bridge the two but even when located in one of the phases, the practice is manifested in significantly different ways and with differing levels of degree. Before however moving on to the research conducted in the North East Region it is necessary to refer to another way that policy, resources and practice can be assessed by looking at the structural position of the people appointed to further staff development.

### **Structural Position of Staff Development.**

There are a number of ways one can look at staff development resources which offer clues to the extent and nature of provision and one of these is to examine the structural position of staff development personnel and services within the totality of a particular university. This varies widely, Partington (UCoSDA No 10 1994) defines 10 variations which can be manifested in 17 differing forms. (see Appendix.2) It is not proposed to explore all of these variations but to highlight what appear to be key elements.

First, the structural position of the staff development function within a particular university is indicative, though not necessarily prescriptive, of the degree of awareness, commitment and resource allocation priorities of the institutional managers. This has major implications for the status of staff development personnel and access to university decision making. Within the five universities of the North East Region there is considerable variation, two have personnel and services unambiguously located in Personnel Departments and do not have exclusive use of buildings for training purposes. Three are located in their own equipped and exclusive units

which are not ostensibly part of Personnel Departments even though there is some line management accountability. Even within these two broad categories there are variations in status, autonomy and access to senior management.

In general, however, it is seen that location in Personnel Departments is problematic even though it might on the surface appear to have a certain logic. "Locus within the Personnel Office takes the function out of the complex arena of jostling academic disciplines, but can plunge it into tensions between the central administration and departments/schools. Additionally personnel functions themselves still have a regrettably low status in many HEIs, and this can present staff developers located there with a double challenge".(UCoSDA No 10 1994). Bearing in mind that centralised staff development is still barely institutionalised as a process in which all staff are involved, the status and credibility of its staff as well as their location is a major issue. In 1981 before the corporatist agenda of government was fully realised, Matheson argued that location in Personnel Departments downgraded the staff development function in the eyes of academic staff. Given the tensions in the mid-1990s in regard to corporate interests and academic professionalism it is not likely that this situation will have changed other than to intensify suspicions of managerial intent in staff development activities. On the other hand Keep and Sisson (1992) make a strong case for the elevation of the personnel functions in higher education "capable of managing the workforce, improving motivation and securing active commitment to change."

However one views this argument, at the moment independent units seem to alleviate some of these problems but only if there is someone of sufficient status heading the unit to "create and maintain dialogue with heads of departments and schools and with senior managers and (dependent) on the status of the person to whom the unit reports". (UCoSDA No.10 1994).

Allied to this is the importance given to the status of the person heading staff development services. "This raises issues of the recruitment, selection, level and designation of the appointment, which in turn are dependent on the recognition given and the resources devoted to the role. In general, the grade of the appointment..... is too low.....to attract a calibre of applicant who is likely to be influential in increasing recognition for the function.(UCoSDA No. 10 1994).

Furthermore, the titles given to the staff development posts are many and various which is well demonstrated in the directory produced by Smith and Smith (1993). In many senses they are indicative of institutional awareness of the issues and of the policies and resource allocations which follow. "The title of the Head and staff gives important signals about the nature and status of the role, which will influence the way the service is regarded." (UCoSDA No. 10 1994). The writers of the aforementioned UCoSDA document try to unpick the terminology in terms of hidden agendas, for example that "director" "manager" emphasise leadership and management, that of "officer" to service to and on behalf of the institution, "co-ordinator" suggests an administrative role and "adviser" implies specialist knowledge.

Of course this can be exaggerated, new appointments particularly those initially conceived as fairly lowly ones may lend more to "pulling a name from the air" or custom and practice within a salary grade than to careful deliberation. It may also be the case that the term director "fits" more in institutions where such terms are common than in others where the high status titles arise out of the academic and not the managerial career. The impact of title and location however cannot be ignored in terms of what it means about institutional definitions and policies and the way this impacts on those targeted for staff development programmes.

It would therefore appear that in the overall picture of staff development provision there is considerable variation in depth, range and availability. That there is some evidence of a different track record in the ex-polytechnics and the "older" universities with the former more likely to appoint staff development personnel and produce programmes of more continuous career development potential because of different histories, functions and accountability procedures. That there is a trend to mandatory training for newly recruited staff but in general the provision of staff development opportunities is marginal within the totality of institutional activities.

There is considerable variation in the definition of what is meant by staff development and in the main this is conceived as those programmes organised centrally by employers. This does not embrace the range of activities which could be embraced in the term and which might make more sense to the creation of a comprehensive and continuous staff development policy. It is argued by those in a position to know the national scene, that there is a need for more consistent and comprehensive policies and that these need to be backed by adequate resource levels. The resources need to include facilitative locations within institutional structures and appropriate status designations and salaries for staff development personnel in order to address development issues at all levels of the organisation. It would appear that in spite of the pressures to develop corporatist strategies and to see staff development as a means to bringing it about, the provision of services to meet these objectives is still a long way short of what would be required.

Some measure of this can be gleaned from Guildfords' ( CVCP 1990) conclusions:-

- \* staff development is still often perceived as a peripheral activity which does not form an integral part of the institutional departmental planning.
- \* much provision of training is still ad hoc and patchy with little rationale and underpinning.
- \* provision is not only erratic but also imbalanced, and much more needs to be done for ancillary, clerical, manual, secretarial and technical staffs.
- \* resources for staff development are still inadequate in all aspects ie. staffing, finance, space and equipment.
- \* staff development is not seen by "management" as the priority activity it ought to be, and individuals lack clearly planned and continuing professional development programmes as an integral part of their contracts and work schedules.
- \* universities still have a long way to go before they can claim that they provide adequately planned, recognised and resourced continuing professional development for all their employees.

With this in mind how can we understand what is happening and how academics experience the attempts at staff development that are being made? To pursue these questions the following chapters describe and analyse an attempt at understanding, by examining aspects of the practice of five universities and the views of a number of staff who have recently been involved in staff development programmes.

## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING FROM PRACTICE. 1 methodological issues.

It has been argued that since the 1960s there has been a steady demand for the training, later called staff development, of academic staff in Britain. Without doubt, provision if somewhat haphazard provision, has increased both in terms of range and depth. Increasingly serious questions are being raised about whether key elements should be compulsory, whether certification which conforms to a national standard and which is transferable across institutions is necessary and viable. A developing agenda is evident about the boundaries of staff development and the degree to which the various elements of career growth are sufficiently cohesive, integrated, acknowledged and accountable. There is also increased demand that university staff development should provide structured opportunities for all staff, at all levels and not as now, mainly confined to the newly appointed.

Overlaying all of these moves is the increased corporatism of the university, allied managerialism of a more hierarchical form and increasing requirements for accountability to the demands of the political economy. It has been informed by "increases in the 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:" (USDU No 8. 1994). All of these pose a fundamental challenge to the professional autonomy which has characterised much of the university career particularly in the "older" universities.

On the other hand it is evident that there is considerable variation in the way this agenda is being heard and enacted and little is known about the views of individual academics who are

on the receiving end of these trends. With this in mind, well aware of the enormity of the task, it was decided to test out how far one could understand the way policies are defined and enacted and how they are experienced and understood in one geographical area of Britain. The prime purpose to test out a way of learning from practice. The area, the North East of England; and the five universities in the region, two of whom are located in Newcastle upon Tyne, one in Sunderland, Durham and Middlesborough.

They are of interest because in spite of their proximity they represent considerable variety of form, history and tradition. Three, the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, the University of Teesside and the University of Sunderland are ex-polytechnics. The University of Durham is the third oldest university in England, collegiate in form and modelled on Oxford and Cambridge and predominantly arts orientated. The University of Newcastle upon Tyne, an ex-university college of Durham was founded as an independent university in 1963 primarily centred on medicine and engineering and as such more oriented to science.

The three ex - polytechnics have an interesting history, Sunderland was one of the first three to be established in the country in 1969 alongside Hatfield and Sheffield.(HMI 1989) It was originally the College of Technology and later joined forces with the College of Education and has a national reputation for its School of Pharmacy. Newcastle Polytechnic now the University of Northumbria followed in the same year and was an amalgamation of Rutherford College of Technology, the College of Art and Design and the Municipal College of Commerce. Two other colleges were later added. (University of Northumbria 1994). Teesside Polytechnic, now the University of Teesside was formed from what was Constantine College in 1970.(University of Teesside 1994).

If one tried to locate them within the categories defined by Duke (1992) of :-

Ancient.

19th century civic.

Newer redbrick, often an ex-university college.

1960s Technological.

Green field plate glass.

three at least could be seen to fit the definitions. Durham is clearly of the "ancient" variety both in terms of its foundation date of 1831 but also in structure, form and orientation; Newcastle is more allied to the "redbrick" category particularly as an ex-university college. More debatably in spite of its polytechnic designation, Northumbria is more akin to the 1960s model of a technological university both in terms of its size but also its dominance within the polytechnic sector. Sunderland and Teesside, not easily embraced in the Duke classification can be seen much more in the polytechnic tradition.

In addition to their different histories and orientations there are also differences in size. If one takes just one measure, that of full and part - time students for the year 1991/2, there are marked differences:-

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| University of Durham      | 6,000 students.  |
| University of Newcastle.  | 10,000 students. |
| University of Northumbria | 14,000 students. |
| University of Sunderland  | 9,000 students.  |
| University of Teesside    | 8,000 students.  |

Source: The Smith Guide to the Staff Development Jungle. (Smith and Smith 1993)

The five, therefore embrace differences between ancient and modern, "old" university and ex-polytechnics, science and arts orientations and large and small institutions. They therefore represent a rich feeding ground for research about institutional form and responses to the changing agendas of the 1980s and 90s.

### **The Relevance of Regionally Based Research.**

There are a number of problems about regionally based research which should be noted. First there are questions about the degree to which they are representative of higher education outside the region. At one level they clearly are not, indeed it could be asked if any selection of universities inform the national scene in a meaningful sense?. It is true that the North-East Region has characteristics similar in kind to other regions who have for many decades been subject to drastic erosion of its economic base. It is however claimed that of all the regions it is experiencing the worst economic climate "the regions economy is still in the doldrums and the gap between North and South is growing wider. Productivity in the North East is the worst in Britain and one in seven people is out of work" (Northern Echo 25th May 1995). The specific industrial history, its relative geographical isolation from the mainstream, can be seen to lend other distinctive features.

How far these impact on the form and practice of higher education is difficult if not impossible to quantify and one is in the realms of speculation. If one is in anyway dependent on local recruitment then there are problems and the nature of these can be gleaned from information collected by the Northern Region Councils Association. For example, the number of young people staying on at school after the age of 16 years although increased in recent years still

lags behind the national picture. In fact the North East has the worst record in the country in this regard. Furthermore although the government declared that by 1997 80% of young people should be educated to NVQ level 2 this looks doubtful in the North East Region bearing in mind that only 57% achieved this in 1993. The financial hardships of students referred to above will not be helped by the fact that household weekly incomes in this region are £207 compared to the national average of £251. (State of the Region Report 1995).

On the other hand the relatively low geographical mobility of its population suggests that the emphasis on serving local needs would find an echo in the practice of the ex-polytechnic universities but the consistently high levels of unemployment, stemming back over many decades, impacts on the intake of all post school education. Although an intelligent guess would be that these would impact on Northumbria less than those at Sunderland and Teesside. To what extent any of these issues affect the two "older" universities in the area is more doubtful, addressing throughout their history a national and international intake and audience.

The relevance to the national scene is however in the sheer variety that they represent even within a narrow geographical area and as such representative of the jungle defined by Smith and Smith (1993). In this sense, although one would not wish to make any exaggerated claims about the degree to which the institutions in this study are representative. they do offer useful insights into many of the national issues referred to earlier and are of interest in themselves.

There are a number of more practical reasons for confining the study to the region in question, the first is cost both in terms of travelling, telephone and postage, particularly as the research was only minimally funded. The second is time, particularly in terms of travelling bearing in mind that according to Moser and Kalton (1985) only a third of time allocated to research

based on interviewing is actually taken up by face to face contact with the interviewee, the rest is absorbed in making contacts and travelling. The third reason is accessibility, in that being located in one of the institutions concerned and having some kind of credibility as a result, access might be easier. Of course the latter could be seen as a negative factor and this will be referred to later in trying to understand response rates. Nevertheless, these practical considerations did structure the shape of the research which might have been differently conceived if funding and time were not such predominant issues.

### **Inter-Agency Research.**

It is also important to note that similar constraints affect the degree to which even in one geographical area, one can effectively compare institutions with such diverse histories and structural properties. One would need to construct a far more wide-ranging and in - depth study over a longer period of time, in order to even claim that one understands the way these institutions work. A research team could be kept very happy for several years in each one, although a case can be made, that if one is seeking a short cut into institutional complexity the window provided by staff development has many strengths. It is the intention to demonstrate that with appropriate caution, it is possible to detect significant trends even with a modest study of staff development, which casts light on the institutions concerned and has some general applicability.

### **The Research and its Methodology.**

Objectives:

The purpose of the research was to explore staff development from a macro and micro perspective. The macro in these terms located in questioning how far the trends towards an increasingly higher profile for the role of staff development in corporate concerns was manifested in the five institutions. In particular how far it could be claimed that there is a staff development policy in operation, the kind of programmes on offer, how the central services are resourced and the structural position of staff development personnel. The micro, here used to refer to how individual academics involved in staff development activity viewed the opportunities offered, in the light of their own career experiences and aspirations. In particular how far their involvement is compatible with the demands of their job and how far they are supported in their endeavours.

It should be noted that the relationship between the macro and micro even in these highly restricted terms e.g. the career interests of individual staff members and the activities of staff developers, may not be or only marginally related. One of the tensions that one would expect to encounter in the research is the importance generated by the internal logic and the institutional form of the academic subject. In important senses many academics are related to their employing institutions mainly as a means of pursuing their subject. Their responses to the corporate interests and activities of the administration may well be clouded in priorities which are subject generated. For example, the interests of university managers to attract more students and not increase staff resources in order drive down unit costs, may be manifested in promoting courses in self directed learning and how to handle large groups. The participation of academics in these programmes may not be motivated by the economics of education but as a means to release time for subject related activities such as research and publication.

To add to the complications these processes may be differently manifested between academic subjects and institutions. It is argued by Hargreaves (1986) that "one very fruitful way of clarifying the micro-macro relationship, then, would involve undertaking a number of studies of different educational settings and spelling out the links between them". The difficulty remains as far as this research is concerned, is the degree to which those participating members of staff are representative of their colleagues within and between subject areas and employing universities and how far one can generalise across institutions even if confined to the five universities in the study. These questions were part of the reflections upon which the methodology was formed.

One of the key issues in defining an appropriate methodology was the relationship between method and accessibility. A guiding principle was to try to work within the frame of qualitative research which would secure in the words of Riley (1990) "opinions, observations and wordy statements rather than numbers". Access therefore needed to be sought to staff development personnel with a key responsibility for policy and practice at a macro level and to individual academics who were currently or recently involved in staff development activity, centrally organised by employers. It was also felt that in regard to the latter, if it was necessary to make choices between contacting a larger number and in doing so having to rely on more positivistic methods and a smaller number, which might facilitate more qualitative outcomes, the smaller focus should reign even though it increases the problem of validity centred on representation.

Allied to this thinking was the recognition that universities are experiencing rapid change and the prime intention was to secure a snapshot of policies and practices at a particular point in time, more specifically, during 1994. It would be interesting to undertake more longitudinal research in an attempt to understand how and why changing staff development agendas emerge

in particular institutions. It was felt however, that apart from the accounts offered by current incumbents, longer ranging, more in-depth work on institutional change was outside the scope of this research. Since the completion of the survey work, some change has already taken place and where it is relevant it will be included in the findings, none of the changes radically alter the basic analysis arising from the research.

### **General Methodological Considerations.**

1. Personal Considerations: Reflecting on the most effective means of making contact, personal as well as professional issues needed to be taken into account. As an academic of some 20 years experience, of mature years, a trained interviewer and from a prestigious university it was felt that risks in making direct telephone contact with staff development personnel could be taken, which might not be the case if the researcher was in a different position. Research, particularly one based on personal contact and interviewing, is a social process, liking, respecting and manner are significant (Moser and Kalton 1971). It was also informed by the kind of situation described by Measor (1988) in regard to her research "we operated with the idea that the quality of the data is dependent on the quality of the relationships you build with the people being interviewed....it is an idea which has no credence with positivist sociology, which is full of warnings against "over rapport"....and recommends maintenance of distance". It was also informed by an attraction to the views expressed by Mies (1993) in discussing feminist research, " the postulate of value-free research, of neutrality and indifference towards the research objects, has to be replaced by conscious partiality, which is achieved through partial identification with the research objects". As an academic whose research interests in staff development stems in part from career experiences, an awareness of

partial identification was evident from the start and did pose questions in the process of the research.

What is at stake here, are differing paradigms about social enquiry, which will be revisited at times throughout the descriptions to follow and no-one would claim that any methodology is without flaws. Simply to note at this point that the degree to which personal issues were a factor is reflected in the methods employed. It is difficult to know how far personal factors were influential but all the staff development personnel readily agreed to introductory discussions and later offered full support and co-operation. In regard to academics contacted via the research, the personal qualities of the researcher are harder to assess. The first stage of the methodology involved postal questionnaires to staff selected by the relevant staff development officer, with an accompanying letter on University of Durham note paper. Those who responded to the questionnaire indicated whether they were willing to be interviewed and identified themselves, these were then contacted by telephone and later met at their place of work. Quite apart from the problems inherent in postal questionnaire and interview methods which will be explored later, there are a number of imponderables which nevertheless need to be noted.

Throughout all this process, information was being filtered and social constructions were taking place. (Silverman 1993). Was the University of Durham a plus or a minus in the response rate and the way answers were constructed? Was age and experience implied in the accompanying letter a factor and the same could be asked of gender? Was the evident association with the staff development service an advantage or not? The importance being that research of this type is not passive, at all stages representations and interpretations are engaged

and decisions being taken and what might be seen as a positive attribute in one part of the process is not necessarily so in others.

2. Initial Contacts: With these considerations in mind it was decided that contacts with staff development personnel would be based on an initial meeting which would be open-ended and which would if successful, open up a dialogue that could be further engaged as and when necessary. In addition to securing information about staff development policies and practice it was important to seek authorisation and help in making contact with individual academics. It was also decided that the contacts with individual academics should be designed to secure as much as possible, agreement for face to face interviews. The prime reason for trying to secure access to interviewing being, uncertainty about the range of responses one might be capable of securing and in recognition that postal questionnaires no matter how well drafted, have the potential for closing down areas of enquiry which may be significant.

It was not known if straight-forward requests for interview to individual academics would be productive. This is more than a problem of finding informants and getting them to agree to contribute but also, in a busy professional life, finding ways which will encourage them to share important aspects of their lives. Given the uncertainty about the response to such a direct request for an interview, it was decided to use a questionnaire which would provide sufficient information for some conclusions of value to be made and provide opportunity to register a willingness to be interviewed. This decision in turn influenced the scale of the research because of the need to prepare for the (admittedly unlikely) event, that everyone in receipt of a questionnaire would be willing to be interviewed.

3. Ethical Issues: Another consideration was about the use of possibly sensitive data. The universities concerned have been subject to a number of government inspired policies specifically designed to foster competition between institutions. In any event it would be unrealistic to ignore the historical competition between institutions on either side of what was the binary divide and within the different sectors. This is not competition which is overt or is it necessarily based on sound knowledge of the qualities of particular institutions, more a process most clearly linked with reference group theory.

The nature of these tensions can be gleaned from an article which is presented in a deliberately light-hearted fashion by Professor Marshmallows (? pseudonym) (1991) from a polytechnic perspective " the real reason quite frankly why we are so much more popular with the government is because we are ideologically kosher. While you in the universities keep whinging on about rigour and scholarship and academic freedom and autonomy and all the rest of the self-serving and sanctimonious claptrap which passes for discourse at the high table, we in the polytechnics have developed an ethos and tastefully promoted an image which resonates very nicely with the social impulses which have produced and sustained Thatcherism". Joke it may be, but in common with many jokes there is more than a little grain of truth in the general tenor of the sentiments expressed which could impact on the research.

In this sense research emanating from one of the institutions concerned, and one which in the region represents the elitism of higher education, could be seen as problematic. On the other hand whatever its source, the possibility of sensitive information emerging at a time when collegial trust is not at the forefront of academic consciousness needed to be considered. Whether soundly based or not, one of the considerations was about exposure and feeling that a research project that was generated by the curiosity and self-interest of an individual researcher

should not needlessly publicise information that did not directly illuminate the national issues referred to above. It should be mentioned that none of the staff development personnel introduced issues of confidentiality of an institutional nature, only later in terms of possible barriers to sharing by individual staff members.

With more certainty about the way information could be handled in regard to individual academics it was decided that all information from them would be handled in ways that addressed only those issues of structural significance and that other insights would be treated in confidence and that they or their departments would not be identified. There are of course major dilemmas in decisions of this nature, not least in whose interests research is conducted and who "owns" the outcomes. It also presents problems of definition about confidentiality, is sharing information with one's supervisor a breach of confidentiality or are the issues purely about publication? All of the participants who were interviewed were made aware of the possibility of publication but were assured of their individual anonymity.

How far can this assurance be maintained in regard to staff development personnel given the fact that they are not thick on the ground, are employees of one of five institutions and can be identified by inference?. The point being that none of these issues could be entirely "water tight" and the methodology relied on the possibility of establishing a relationship of trust.

4. Cost Considerations: It was also decided that costs in terms of finance and time had to be minimised. This influenced the way individuals were contacted and imposed time management pressures on the way interviews were arranged and conducted although not in ways that negatively affected the outcome.

Before examining the methods employed in more detail there are more general considerations to address and these are central to all social research. It has been stated that the research method was focused on an attempt to obtain mainly qualitative data, this is due partly to a lack of empathy with the stress on objectivity and reliability which characterises a more positivistic approach which can serve to marginalise the complexities of human interaction. A more important consideration however lay in doubts as to the efficacy of relying other than qualitative orientated methods in penetrating the jungle that is staff development and the complexity of the academic career. In fact because of the complexity of the "subject matter" it was an attempt to understand some of the interweaving variables without too tight a prescription which characterises more positivistic methods of a " formula, a statement of hypothesis to be tested; an account of sampling and methods; and a description of results" (Silverman 1985).

Although the literature on staff development had identified a number of issues, no explicit hypotheses were tested in these terms. In fact the objectives of qualitative methods as described by Van Maanen, cited by Das (1983) as a process "to describe, decode, translate or otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain, more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" seemed to fit the task in which "behaviour is viewed as situationally specific, idiosyncratic, multi variate or holistic" (Fineman and Mangham 1983). The danger of an over prescribed research design which can lead to a lack of sensitivity to theory and new ideas by the imposition of meaning through prior definition of concepts (Glaser and Strauss 1967), seemed to reflect the complexity of making assumptions in the area of staff development.

This is not to argue that qualitative methods are without flaw, quite the reverse, not least in the degree to which information which is often presented in non standard forms can be understood. The criticism of Miles (1979) of the process of analysis of qualitative methods as being "essentially intuitive, primitive and unmanageable in any rational sense" cannot be lightly ignored. On the other hand the idea that more positivistic approaches are in some senses more value free and more manageable is open to debate. The choice of research area, the questions, hypothesis and boundaries of enquiry all require human judgement and choice. Indeed an argument that could be made in support of qualitative data is that because of its "messiness" it demands a greater awareness of the interpretive problems in making connections. In this regard the view of Walker (1985) that "analysis of qualitative material is more explicitly interpretive, creative and personal than in quantitative analysis, which is not to say that it should not be equally systematic and careful" made sense in the reflections which underpinned the methodology.

Another factor which has been only lightly touched on earlier, is the possible problems in the interplay between influence and interpretation. This is particularly so in the commitment to qualitative data which finds expression in open ended questions and which allows respondents to tell their stories in their own words. This is not purely a problem of interpretation but also about possible influence of the interviewing process itself. Although effective methods of encouraging "the telling" require the facilitator to pose questions in open and non prescriptive ways, within a two hour meeting the potential for this to move into dialogue are significantly raised.

Added to which, the isolation in which many people work and the lack of support they experience poses dilemmas which are both practical and ethical. This situation is described and

analysed by Finch (1993) in terms of her work with women, in which "the friendly female interviewer,...with time to listen and guarantees of confidentiality, not surprisingly finds it easy to get women to talk." This was evident in earlier research undertaken with women community and youth workers by Sawbridge and Spence (1991) and was also a factor during this staff development research, irrespective of gender. In fact as Finch discovered, the response "I've really enjoyed having someone to talk to " was common. The point being, that the degree to which the potential to exploit the isolation of the person cannot be ignored, although it may speak volumes about the lack of professional support systems which is essentially professional and political in nature.

All of these factors significantly informed the enquiry and were shown to have relevance during the process of the research. Although the early thinking centred on the desire to understand macro-institutional issues and micro-individual experiences and that a number of approaches seemed appropriate, the detailed planning of the research methodology emerged after a number of consultations with staff development personnel. The planning process comprised three separate elements:-

1. meetings and contacts with staff development personnel.
2. consultations about methodology.
3. initiating contacts with individual academics.

Meetings were arranged by telephone with senior staff development personnel in each of the five universities and the meetings took place on site. During these meetings the proposed research was outlined, the current state of staff development in the particular university described and accompanying documentation about policies and programmes provided. The degree of co-operation and the willingness to facilitate the research was most marked and this

was later demonstrated in myriad ways too numerous to detail but in general, comprise support and a ready supply of information. It was agreed after the initial meeting that staff development personnel would identify fifty (50) academics in each of their institutions who were currently or had recently been involved in staff development programmes. The cohort comprising as much as possible, staff from across the departmental range and with a gender distribution proportionate to their representation in staff development.

A problem was immediately presented by the fact that one of the officers wished to utilise the research to add to in-house evaluations of a particular certificate course in teaching methods, involving 65 members of staff. This had the potential to distort the research in three ways, first in creating an uneven numerical distribution between the five universities but also in being confined to one course whereas selection was being made across the board in the others. On the other hand if the research, modest though it is, could offer a service to a participating university this might outweigh the disadvantages and might be useful in itself. The third problem was that it would require additions in regard to the particular institution, to the range of questions being posed which entailed lengthening the questionnaire. In certain key respects such as factual information about employment on career pressures and aspirations, the questionnaires were identical. The difference being confined to seeking additional information about a particular course. Based on purely pragmatic considerations of the need to make contact with individual academics and the fact that even though all were participating in one course, they were drawn from across the university, it was agreed to modify the original plans for the research. Examples of the questionnaires used in four institutions and the one used with a larger number can be seen in Appendix 3.a and b.

The outcome of the initial meetings was an agreement that -

- (a) a detailed methodology would be produced in written form for consideration.
- (b) that staff development personnel would then check the questionnaire and accompanying letter and advise on any necessary alterations.
- (c) With the exception of the university where the cohort was by definition selected, they would select 50 academics currently or recently involved in staff development programmes drawn from as wide a departmental range as possible and with a gender distribution proportionate to their involvement. In anticipation that responses to the questionnaire would be facilitated by a commitment to confidentiality and to protect staff development personnel from possible criticism of providing information on staff without their consent, it was agreed that the list of staff selected would remain confidential to the staff development service and this would be clearly stated.

These meetings and later contacts were also invaluable in furthering understanding about the role of staff development in the relevant institutions, particular the way they were resourced. There were marked differences which will be referred to later in the structural position of staff development personnel, these included differences in title and function and in type and level of resource. Furthermore, these were not readily accountable by size or total institutional resource levels but more easily understood through the history and culture and current preoccupations of the institutions concerned. To some extent the personality of the incumbents also appeared to be a factor. All of these influenced the establishment of a methodology with the intention of creating space for institutional diversity to emerge.

The initial meetings with staff development personnel highlighted a number of issues which were not fully appreciated prior to the meetings. The most notable, was the variation in the way staff development is defined and practised between the five institutions. On the other hand there were two strands evident in four of the universities which needed to be reflected in the methodology. These were the moves to certificated initial teacher training and questions of mandatory involvement in staff development for all newly appointed staff unless it could be demonstrated that they were sufficiently experienced or had undertaken prior training. The former highlighted questions about the degree to which motivation was affected by certification and the latter, about terms and conditions of employment and the degree to which these were understood and implemented.

The variety of staff development programmes and the differing way they were offered, coupled with evident differences in the structural position of staff development personnel and services, particularly between those who headed up their own, geographically separate units and those who had an office within the personnel departments served to emphasise certain questions. For example, about the way staff became involved in any particular programme and how they saw the relationship of staff development and their career development.

These deliberations led to a methodology based on four components:

- 1) a questionnaire to be sent to 50 academics in 4 universities and a modified questionnaire sent to 65 academics in 1 university.
- 2) an interview schedule with those academic staff who register a willingness to do so on the returned questionnaires.
- 3) an analysis of institutional and staff development policy statements.

- 4) an analysis of the structural position of staff development personnel in the light of the above.

### **Planning Issues and Processes.**

#### **1. Anonymity.**

As stated above the identity of the academics selected would remain confidential to the institution but would have an opportunity to identify themselves if willing to be interviewed. This decision was based on the kind of thinking expressed by Moser and Kalton (1985) that anonymity helps people to express themselves without the fear of being personally open to account. On the other hand it presents problems in denying researchers the opportunity to send reminders in issues of non-response or from checking the accuracy of meaning in a particular response. The former proved to be an issue particularly in the light of the fact (now seen to be a mistake) that staff development personnel were not asked to keep a list of those selected which denied the opportunity for a general reminder to be sent.

#### **2. Distribution.(anonymity and cost considerations)**

The anonymity was protected by the method of distribution which also fulfilled the intention to minimise costs, although Moser and Kalton (1985) argue that the provision of a stamp for questionnaire return increases the obligation to reply. The question of cost was however a factor and the method used utilised the internal mailing system of each university. Copies of the questionnaire, an accompanying letter and an envelope addressed to the researcher c/o the staff development office, marked confidential for the return of questionnaires was supplied with a blank envelope for the staff development staff to address and send out.

This, although having the advantage of minimal cost and ensuring anonymity between the researcher and correspondent also embodied a number of issues which may have affected the outcome. First, are those that surround the use of any postal questionnaire. Although it can be a quicker means of making contact, can elicit a considered as distinct from immediate response and that the evidence suggests that people are more willing to make less socially acceptable responses via questionnaires (Moser and Kalton 1985) there are a number of problems associated, particularly with posted questionnaires. These include difficulties of securing an adequate response, the fact that respondents can see the totality of the questions and different answers cannot be seen as independent and the right person might not complete the questionnaires. (Moser and Kalton 1985). In addition, as far as this research is concerned the evident association with the staff development officers and the use of the internal mailing system for returned questionnaires may have raised questions about how far confidentiality was assured.

### 3. Issues in questionnaire design.

The key purpose of using a questionnaire was to secure information both factual and based on opinion and to provide opportunities for further contact with those willing to be interviewed. The factual information included age, gender, qualifications, academic subject, length of service, aspects of previous work experience, terms of employment, appraisal and experience in staff development programmes. The information based on opinion included views on staff development programmes, departmental support systems, work pressures, career priorities, stress and the relevance or not of staff development.

All of these raise questions about language both in terms of terminology but in rules of discourse. For example, the consultations with staff development personnel highlighted a number of problems in the definitions of staff development. In some universities the term " in-service training" would be understood but not so in others. The use of staff development alone would be seen as too vague and it was considered by all that a general term which would then be clarified in the accompanying letter was agreed. Other factors included how to identify academic subject specialisms of respondents given the fact that the abolition of the binary divide was sufficiently recent for subject codings to be still based on the old funding councils definitions. This influenced the enclosure of both forms of coding (see Appendix 4) so that staff could locate the code relevant to their subject.

Another issue arose about language and the degree to which staff across the five universities would share the same understandings. This particularly applied to terms such as in-service training, staff development etc. Discussions on this issue not only illustrated the variety of terminology in use but also the problems of doing cross institutional research. A decision was taken to use the term in - house training and to explain at the end of the accompanying letter what was meant by the term. Again the pressure to ensure brevity was a factor and the result of these deliberations can be seen in Appendix 5 a and b.

Without these consultations the final questionnaire would have been less relevant across institutions. On the other hand, the fact that a researcher and a staff development officer agree on a form of words does not solve all the problems. What makes sense to people who are working within a staff development paradigm may not be read in the same way by those whose priorities rest elsewhere. If one wants to know what a person thinks, one must ask and rely on

the questions but there are ever present dangers that questions will be misread and that the answers will be distorted by the reader. (Moser and Kalton 1985).

There are also major problems about the people approached who do not respond, who may differ significantly from respondents and care must be taken to ensure that the problems of representation are reflected in the findings. Response rates can be affected by a number of factors for example, who appears to be sponsoring the work and here the connection with staff development personnel or the involvement with the University of Durham may be significant. Lack of interest; the length of the questionnaire (commented on by one of the respondents); the degree to which the value of the research is communicated and the degree to which the questions make sense to the recipients, can be significant. It is important to spell out to people how they were selected and the assurance of confidentiality is helpful (Moser and Kalton 1985). The degree to which all these considerations were influential in the response rate is unknown but did inform the questionnaire design and its distribution.

#### 4. Interviewing as a Method.

The interview "group" arose from the questionnaire and an early decision was taken to interview all those who expressed a willingness to take part. This posed a number of issues, first how far were those who expressed a willingness to be interviewed were representative of their institutions. This becomes more important given the fact that the size of the "sample" reduces at each stage. The second issue centred on institutional spread because of the uneven response rate. With these factors in mind, caution needs to be exercised about the degree to which the responses are representative. A safer view of the results is to see them as insights into how a number of academics in a particular university, at a specific point in time, view the

relationship between their own working realities and employer led staff development. On the other hand one cannot ignore the fact that many of the experiences and views were common across institutions which suggests a less idiosyncratic conclusion.

With this in mind, contact with individual academics was made by telephone, the problems in contacting busy people supporting the two thirds/one third time allocations between contact and interview, referred to by Moser and Kalton (1985). Arrangements were then made for an on - site visit and in spite of the difficulty of using this method it was experienced as a useful start to the interviewing process particularly in terms of ice-breaking. Trying to arrange meetings by letter would have been infinitely more time consuming and less effective in establishing rapport. It is also the case, as market researchers have discovered is that it is harder to say "no" to someone in direct contact than it is by ignoring a request by letter. One had to be prepared for the fact that respondents for a variety of reasons, might have changed their mind.

Other issues are those that apply to any interview process and at the heart of these are the kind of expectations that researchers have about the efficacy of the process. Interviews based on positivistic perspectives suggest that what is "produced" are facts, those who work from a more interactionist perspective see interviewees as experiencing subjects who actively construct their world. (Silverman 1993). This theme is reflected in the work of Denzin (1970) who points out that respondents possess different interactional roles from the interviewer. There is difficulty in penetrating private worlds and the context in which the interview takes place is important in seeking understanding.

Other factors that are important in guarding against distortion in the interview process according to Denzin (1970) is the relative status of the interviewer, and that in "volatile, fleeting relationships interviewees can fabricate tales which belie actual facts. This is not meant to suggest that people lie but because, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) there is an assumption of a cultural script which may not necessarily be shared and understood. Nor in their view is this necessarily a benevolent process, the open ended, non-directive interview is still controlling in the way the script is posed and responded to. In order to recognise the complexity of this process we need according to Goffman (1981) an understanding of talk and non-verbal behaviour.

##### 5. Preparation for and the conduct of the interviews.

One way of trying to embrace but not be disabled by these factors was attempted in preparing for the interviews. During the telephone contacts it was explained that the main focus would be developing points that were evident in the responses to the postal questionnaire. This meant that although there was broad similarity of focus e.g. academic career and staff development, each interview differed in some detail. This is not without problems as Seltiz et al (quoted by Silverman 1984) point out, "flexibility results in a lack of comparability from one interview with another. Moreover, the analysis is more difficult and time consuming than of standardised interviews". This would have been more significant if the interviews had been totally open ended but they were not. Although opportunities were provided for individual responses and one of the key methods was in reflecting questions back, using the terminology in the written responses e.g. "in response to x you mentioned y, can you elaborate?" the major focus was on the same general themes.

The conduct of the interviews was informal, in the vast majority of cases in the workers' own room. The interviews often started with a cup of coffee and general observations about the work environment or local travelling conditions. This served not only to "break the ice" but also offered some observation to take place about working environments and more domestic issues about travelling to work. These have not been plotted in detail but the overall impression is one of most of the staff in the ex-polytechnic universities sharing rooms, sometimes with three other people and as a consequence lacking many of the markers to personal and professional identity evident in all of the interviews with staff in the "older" universities. On the other hand markers are not always helpful as in the case of the interview conducted in a narrow space made available in the midst of a dismantled bicycle. The sharing of rooms also meant that on occasions it was necessary to find an empty teaching room in which to conduct the interview.

The interview process therefore fitted the description of more informal approaches to the interview task described by Moser and Kalton (1985). A number of key issues were identified from the questionnaires, with space for additional exploration where necessary. In the early stages a tape recorder was used, sometimes discontinued mid interview because of surface noise or not used at all because of intuitive feeling that it would "get in the way". As researcher confidence in the interview process increased and because the efficacy of note taking as a method became evident, the tape-recorder was discontinued. The advantages of taping described by Buchanan et al (1988) of the ability to pick up data and verbatim quotes, the increased ability to concentrate on the interview to probe more deeply without affecting the flow by note taking, were not as well demonstrated in these interviews.

In fact note-taking was used to facilitate further questioning and did not present the problem of having to remember what had been said earlier if later information so demanded, as would have been the case with using a tape recorder. This is particularly relevant in long interviews and these ranged in length between one and a half to two and a half hours. It does require the ability to take outline notes but can also be used to recapitulate statements which may not be clear, hence "have I made the correct note here about ..." or "you mentioned earlier...I'm not sure about the adequacy of my notes and it seems an important point".

When the need to take down exact quotations was presented, it was found to be useful at times to ask for repetition in order for recording accuracy and to signal the value of the insight. This could not always be done, particularly if the verbal comment was illustrative of a state of mind which it was felt the person would find uncomfortable to acknowledge. In this case notes were taken and reinforced in the time structured into the process at the end of each interview for additional note taking in private.

Clearly there are flaws in this methodology, key elements can be missed and the act of note taking can be another interpretative stage in the communication flow. It could interrupt the flow of an interview but can also provide welcome breaks particularly if the interviewee is waxing lyrical on issues that are not related to the general area of the research. Although Moser and Kalton (1985) point out that there is no evidence that interviewer training produces more effective interviews, experience of training in interview skills in a wide variety of social work settings was found to be useful in this research.

These were most evident in being able to meet some of the requirements that Moser and Kalton (1985) argue are helpful particularly in regard to attitudinal questions. This was

particularly so in the use of open questions posed in an impartial way, being able to adapt to the flow of the interview if a planned later issue cropped up earlier and to demonstrate a permissive attitude. The need to demonstrate interest did not depend on prior training, the interviews proving to be fascinating and informative.

It does however require an awareness of the assumptions which underpin a preference for open ended questions (Silverman 1993) particularly in the view that this resolves the limitations of more formal, tightly structured methods. At one level it does, in that it can create the climate for unplanned for and valuable insights which might not emerge by ticking boxes or sticking to a rigid formulae. On the other hand, how one makes sense of these insights other than treating them as idiosyncratic phenomena presents a range of problems not confronted in the same way by formal systems. These will be discussed more fully in the analysis of the results.

## 6. Institutional and Staff Development Documents.

The third component of the methodology was an analysis of institutional and staff development documents. These comprised institutional mission statements and specific references in them to staff and their role. In addition, an examination of documents produced by staff development personnel in either stating policy or in programme statements which would cast light on the aims, objectives and the practice of staff development. The available information was variable in both quantity and quality and no claim can be made that it is comprehensive. It poses questions about how far one can understand an institution and its practices from published documents, particularly in the case of mission statements which may have more to do with external politics than internal reality. The variability in itself is however informative particularly if related to other findings in the research.

## 7. The structural position of staff development personnel.

The fourth focus of analysis was the structural position of staff development personnel as illustrated by departmental location, number of personnel, access to resource and to key decision makers. All of these factors were evident and represented considerable variation. The key methodological problems encountered in this aspect of the research rested in the access to information particularly about resource levels, some very obvious such as the number of staff employed to further staff development programmes, but less accessible in terms of funding. Other issues are presented in how one accounts for variability and here one has to related current provision within the context of the history, current location within the higher education system and the apparent priorities of each institution. None of these are easy to analyse with any degree of certainty within a limited research area.

In conclusion therefore, the research method based on postal questionnaires, open-ended interviews, an examination of a limited number of institutional and staff development policy documents and an examination through spasmodic meetings and telephone conversations with staff development personnel, presents a wide range of methodological pitfalls. On reflection, it would have been useful to have conducted a pilot study in the hope of refining the methodology which might have generated a higher response rate. This would have been particularly useful in finding a way of reminding staff without breaching confidentiality.

It is not therefore claimed that all of the pitfalls have been avoided but sufficiently so to indicate that corporate interests in staff development and the professional interests of individual academics are not necessarily related. Furthermore that the lack of cohesion in staff

development policies referred to by Guildford in 1990 and later by USDU (1994) is demonstrable in the five universities in this study in spite of attempts in some of them to introduce more systematic processes.

More significantly perhaps are the indications which suggest that the challenge to the professional culture of the academic as manifested by the "older" universities can be seen as impacting to some extent in regard to preparation for teaching. On the other hand there is evidence of academic drift in the general cultural context in which staff in the ex-polytechnic sector define their career priorities.

## CHAPTER 6

### LEARNING FROM PRACTICE 2. policies and structures.

The presentation of research findings, even in regard to research as modest as this, is no easy task. Information is gleaned from a variety of sources and when drawn from several institutions, often presented in different forms. Some of the information lends itself to statistical analysis, other to illustration by quotation; some conducive to a degree of certainty, other forms more impressionistic. Rarely is it complete and not always consciously conveyed and certainly not always verifiable. For example, in any contact researchers are forming impressions and reaching conclusions on evident attitudes, the personalities of individuals and the minutiae of environmental, verbal and non-verbal factors which lead to impression formation. Consequently the decision about what is relevant, what is verifiable and its degree of significance, without losing the richness of the range of "evidence" gleaned is essentially partial and based on personal judgement.

In order to narrow the focus to that which is verifiable in terms of what is written and stated, the key findings of the survey will be presented in the following format:-

- 1). Institutional mission statements and staff development policies.
- 2). The structural position and resourcing of staff development activity.

In an attempt to avoid unnecessary repetition between questionnaire and interview responses the information will be divided in the following way:-

- in Chapter 7 most of the responses from the postal questionnaire will be analysed and in Chapter 8 the responses from parts of the questionnaires and all of individual interviews will be described and related to the analysis.

The four sections will then be discussed in the light of the above discussion about the demand and supply of staff development in British universities particularly in the trend towards institutional corporatism. The whole will then be explored within the wider issues of how as organisations universities can be understood and the degree to which, there is an unreconcilable tension between professional and institutional corporate interests.

This chapter will centre primarily around the extent to which there are discernible policies, how they can be understood, how generalised they are and the impact they have on practice. The discussion highlights the significance of language and rhetoric, which is primarily managerial discourse more akin to that allied to corporate capitalism. It reflects a legitimising language which cloaks the reality of micro politics within institutions. It also reflects the degree to which institutional autonomy mediates what is essentially a contested discourse about the functions of higher education and what is needed to foster its growth and practice. It needs therefore to be borne in mind that the following is informed by a view that one is not addressing some value free set of policies and practices, the shortcomings of which can be located in institutional inefficiency.

The discussion is also posited on the view that underlying the thrust for more staff development, are competing agendas which are strongly or weakly felt depending on the history, tradition and structural location of individual universities operating in a climate where the relationship between government and the higher education system has served to foster

division both within and between institutions. An examination of policies and practice within five universities described briefly below might appear on the surface to say little about the higher education system as a whole but all of the dilemmas referred to above are demonstrable in the universities of the North East Region and nothing in the literature challenges the view that these have relevance to the wider system. An examination of some aspects of policy and practice will illustrate this point.

### **Institutional Mission Statements and Staff Development Policies.**

It is necessary to reaffirm the definitions employed in the following discussion. Staff development policies are those that are written and publicly available either "in house" or more widely, which influence the provision of centrally organised, employer led, staff development opportunities. Later, it will be more convenient when discussing the components of the programmes on offer to refer to training. These distinctions will further emphasise the difference between a wide - ranging and comprehensive approach to staff development and the current provision of specific training inputs as far as employer led activity is concerned.

The most readily available source of information about the degree to which there are stated policies is in institutional "mission statements" which carry implications for human resource management. This is not to deny that there may be unstated policies that influence provision and practice or even that the absence of a clear policy is necessarily indicative of a lack of interest in staff development. Simply to note that in this study, there were varying degrees of policy formulation and understanding that seemed to influence the perception of staff developers about their role and the degree to which their activities were recognised and valued by institutional management.

In making a case for the mission statement as a starting point it is necessary to register the limitations of this approach. A degree of scepticism is necessary in using these as a benchmark or predictor of practice. Part of the process of the shift towards managerialism and the advocacy of businesslike orientations in the way universities are managed, marketed and evaluated, which formed the basis of the Jarratt Report (1985), was to set the climate for the production of mission statements which in effect embody the aims, objectives and utility of the organisation.

It was the introduction of the mission concept into public sector higher education as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act which provided the spur, first in public sector higher education and after the removal of the binary divide across the system. In public sector higher education, the abolition of control over funding by local authorities, removing the control of CNAAs in the validation of courses added additional fuel to the formulation of mission statements and to the general pressure towards market orientation. By the early 1990s this has led to the production of mission statements by all institutions of higher education.

This concept is largely based on ideas about customer orientation of businesses developed by Drucker in the early 1970s (Drucker 1973). Primarily it was influenced by market oriented ideas about the way businesses could attract and be responsive to customers. The logic of the idea is that customers (and in this sense one must read students, potential employers and research funders), can then distinguish between producers as they wend their way through the market. It is also seen as a mechanism whereby organisations can test out provision in relation to declared aims and objectives. At heart the intention is to introduce a market in education generally, in the belief that it facilitates choice by customers by clear declarations of intent by

producers. The competition so engendered seen as a spur to more "relevant" products and in the belief that it provides the incentive for a more efficient use of resources.

Its application to higher education can be argued as going some way to being a mechanism whereby staff can identify the important features of the institutions to which they are attached and their role in the achievement of effective outcomes. It could also be argued that higher education has operated in a taken for granted fashion for too long, with some of the more prestigious universities in particular, operating as though the universal good was self evident simply by their existence. The requirement that their aims and objectives and how these will be implemented are made explicit, can in these terms, be seen as no bad thing in spite of the market oriented baggage in which it is encumbered.

In its application however, Peeke (1994) argues that mission statements have become the site of conflict between academics and institutional managers. It is argued that there has been a shift on the part of staff in the way such statements are viewed because "once, what many perceived as part of an academic process, has become associated with the managerial ethos that is pervading all aspects of British education. What can be construed as a process which encourages academic peers to discuss their fundamental beliefs and values...for many, mission establishment has been revealed as part of the managerial approach ...reducing the influence of teachers...and narrowing the difference between educational and business organisations".  
(Peeke 1994)

Whether staff identify or feel alienated from institutional mission statements is important but they can be viewed more as political documents for public consumption, than a set of guiding principles for internal breast beating. There has been no comprehensive analysis of how

institutions arrive at their particular mission statement and it is unlikely that these have emerged as a result of wide consultation with all the interests that are represented in any large scale institution. It is much more likely to be the case that they<sup>are</sup> produced by a relatively small number of people who operate on ideas about institutional image both past and desirous in the future, the self perceived distinctiveness with other competitors and accompanied by some fairly strongly held views about the target market. The degree to which these represent reality or shared understandings across any institution is at least debatable.

A more profound set of questions about mission statements is posed by Barnett (1994) when he asks if missions can be imposed on communities or whether they develop organically out of communities. Of course this presupposes that universities are communities, a subject to which we will return but his view of mission statements as they operate at the moment is best summed up thus - "So-called mission statements are either a statement of the trite and the bland, failing to demarcate differing activities of institutions, or they are so detailed and specific that, if taken seriously they would impede the autonomy of an institution's academic staff. (Fortunately they are seldom taken seriously)" (Barnett. 1994.)

Doubts about this process were not evident in the interviews with staff development personnel in this study, quite the reverse. All the staff development personnel in the three ex-polytechnic universities who contributed to this study, volunteered references to the importance of the institutional mission statement in the way their work is conducted. This was not evident in discussions with similar officers in the "older" universities. This suggests a number of possible explanations, first that the awareness of institutional mission is less clearly in the forefront of staff discourse in the "older" universities. A factor which is reinforced by the fact that none of the "older" university academic staff interviewed for this research mentioned mission

statements but several in the ex-polytechnic sector, introduced it as a rationale for their actions.

Another possible explanation is that the ex-polytechnic staff development personnel see themselves more as an integral part of management in higher education, a factor which has some credence in the way they described their ready access to senior policy makers. In the "older" universities there was a "feel" during the discussions with staff developers of seeing themselves in some kind of half way house between the interests of management in furthering the learning of staff in certain areas and the expressed needs and problems of individual academics. This is not to suggest that in the ex-polytechnics that there was insensitivity to the needs of staff, quite the reverse. In fact in many ways programmes were pitched and organised in ways which were clearly empathic to the interests of academics under pressure.

On the other hand the emphasis of being part of the management team and with access to the most senior managers was emphasised more in the ex-polytechnics. This could be related to the arguments that suggest differences between the historically determined managerial styles of the two wings of what was the binary divide. In this regard the ex-polytechnics, their roots in local authority provision, being more hierarchically organised than "older" universities (Harding 1978), the "older" universities in theory at least, managed by a community of scholars via the senate. On reflection it would have been useful if there had been specific questions about institutional mission in the research design, with the possibility that the apparent distinctions which arose out of informal discussion could have been tested in a more formal sense. Certainly in seeking later information about any changes to mission statements all those contacted, not always those originally seen, counselled caution in how they should be interpreted.

So what light do these public statements about mission cast on staff development policies? First it is necessary to define certain ground rules that have been employed in the following discussion and these have been informed by ethical issues referred to above. These centre on how far it is necessary to identify particular institutions whilst at the same time meeting the scholarly requirements of adequate referencing. It has therefore been decided wherever possible, to reference at the end of a set of quotations or piece of evidence which is publicly available in alphabetical order and not necessarily in the order in which they are discussed. This is felt to be necessary partly out of empathy with the view of Bulmer (1988) who argues that researchers in organisations "have an obligation to safeguard organisations from harmful references to its commercial activities or reputation". The main reason however, is because the general argument does not depend on individual or institutional identification but on issues that could arise in the study of any grouping of universities. The issues have more to do with the structure of higher education and the climate in which it operates, than to anything inherently "good" or "bad" in the practice of any one university.

To begin to unravel the significance of mission statements and how language is used to summarise what are evidently complex aims and objectives, one needs to be selective whilst at the same time not ignoring any contextual elements that cast light on meaning. For example, the institutions that are in many senses in a weaker position in terms of their overall national profile, emphasise their commitment to locality more specifically than those who identify with national and international reputations. Of course one can be open to a charge of cynicism and the commitments expressed in mission statements can be seen as profoundly held statements of principle. It needs to be borne in mind however, that they are not just descriptions of what for a better term, one could call institutional ideology but are, as they were intended to be,

marketing statements. It is well known that marketing whether it be about soap powder, cars or degree level study is most effective if targeted to the most receptive consumers

It therefore seems, if one accepts this as a basis of analysis, that one of the key distinguishing features of the mission statements is the degree to which they display a confidence in the universities' national and international credibility and in their ability to attract well qualified students and staff. Hence, those that are recognised in the region as being of this kind, emphasise their position as "a leading national institution", "by volume of activities among the dozen largest in the United Kingdom" or distinctiveness as a collegiate university. Further emphasis is given to goals about the pursuit of "excellence", "quality", to maintain their high position in research, the recruitment of "top quality", "able and motivated" students from home and overseas. In addition there are statements about the locality and contribution to the community and some reference to recruitment of top quality student "from a broad base", "to recruit able and motivated students ... through traditional and novel forms of access", "to be more accessible to non - traditional entrants.

Statements of this kind are differently expressed and it is argued significantly so, in mission statements emanating from those institutions who cannot or do not wish to operate in this frame. Here there are statements of "to maintain and develop the academic character established as a polytechnic", to "promote learning, research and training through partnership between staff, students, industry and the community". The access agenda is more clearly articulated by these institutions, with a "commitment to bringing opportunities in higher education to all those with ability...in particular we will target currently under-represented groups and will welcome students from a wide variety of backgrounds", "the universities' central objective is to increase access...without compromising its academic standards." The

research agenda is evident but less prominently so than the universities referred to earlier.

Source: (University of Durham 1994), (University of Newcastle 1995), (University of Northumbria 1995).(University of Sunderland 1994), (University of Teesside 1995).

It is argued here that one can detect within mission statements, distinctions about how institutions define themselves within the academic pecking order. There is also evidence of influence, across all five institutions of what has been described earlier as the "four Cs" particularly in regard to customerization. There is also evident concern in the specific language used and the phraseology to register institutional relevance to the political economy. So there are declarations of a commitment to "the needs of customers", "contributions to the region through support for industry and commerce", "to provide a particular focus for the development of educational, cultural, social and economic life of the community", "to play a major role in enhancing the culture of the wider community....in the development and regeneration of...". It would be difficult on the basis of these statements, even with a great deal of local knowledge, to guess their source. It is necessary therefore to see these statements as dancing to a national as well as a local tune.

A similar issue arises from the references in these public documents to staff development, particularly if one tried to guess how stated policy is manifested in practice. All declare an interest in furthering the professional and individual development of their staff. Some are more oblique than others e.g. "to recruit, inform, train and motivate staff of high calibre"; "to provide assistance to staff to enable them to enhance their professional skills as teachers, researchers, administrators and service staff...to support staff development policies which meet the needs of the academic programme but also take account of individual aspirations"; "we believe in assisting staff to fulfil their potential...and will support and encourage personal

development...the universities' commitment to achieving Investment in People status and the emphasis on quality within staff development programmes will ensure quality impacts on all employees"; "staff of the University are a key resource and their development is critical to our success...a new Forum will plan and co-ordinate staff development across the University and lead our Investment in People initiative"; finally "To clearly specify the Universities commitment to staff appraisal, development and training and the resources to be made available... To seek to develop to the full the potential of all staff through staff training and development...appraisal has been a major factor in determining staff training programmes". (University of Durham 1994), (University of Newcastle 1995), (University of Northumbria 1995), (University of Sunderland 1994), (University of Teesside 1995).

Again, as with mission statements even those who work within the region, or dare one suggest, those who work within a particular university, would not find it easy to identify the source of these statements. Yet there are marked differences in staff development resource allocation within the five universities, the range of programmes are markedly different as is the structured involvement of staff. The point being, that the public declarations are no guide to institutional commitment and practice, in fact they can be positively misleading. One of the strongest statements above emanates from the university with the weakest provision of centralised staff development of the five in this study, if measured by numbers of staff development personnel, access to resource and institutional influence.

It is necessary to go beyond these in order to understand the role played by centralised staff development and the similarities and differences in practice. There are a number of ways that this can be done which offer clues to institutional policy, the three that have been selected here are as follows:-

1. The existence of a staff development policy that conforms to a national standard and which embraces all staff as part of their terms and conditions of employment in which an attempt is made to ensure that all staff development processes are integrated.
2. The existence of a certificated initial teacher training course which is embodied in the terms and conditions of certain staff. This is further supplemented with a programme of development opportunities some of which might be compulsory, for staff appraisers for example, but which are largely addressed to staff on a voluntary basis.
3. The existence of elements of staff development training for example in regard to induction and appraisal where there is pressure for the relevant target group to participate but where involvement in the rest of centrally generated programmes is voluntary.

Here there are interesting distinctions, the most notable is between the two universities who aim to achieve Investors in People status and the rest. There are further distinctions between the four universities who have certificated initial teachers training courses with varying degrees of mandatory involvement and the one that so far, has not gone down this path.

#### 1. Staff Development Within a National Framework.

First it is important to note that in regard to the commitment to seek Investors in People status, one of the universities is only in the earliest exploratory stages and the other, much further along the way, is working to a deadline of January 1996. It is worthwhile to briefly

examine the scheme bearing in mind that none of the universities in this study have experience in its full implementation.

It is an award which involves a systematic commitment to the training of staff at all levels and function within the institution. The Investors in People award scheme was launched by the government in 1991 and "is a major initiative...which aims to encourage employers of all sizes and sectors to improve their performance by linking the training and development needs of their employees to their organisations objectives."(Doidge 1995) It was not primarily aimed at higher education but part of a general management by objectives approach to the utilisation of staff in any enterprise. It involves convincing an external assessor, usually a relevant Training and Enterprise Council, that the organisation has met the required standard. The standard is a set of principles about the training and development of staff which is underpinned by two main elements, one that training and development is integral to the organisations' activities and two, that the organisation must include all employees of all categories in its training and development activities. It has now become the key mechanism by the government to encourage employers to systematise staff development for all their staff.

The standard has four main components,

- a) **commitment** at top level, a business plan and effective communication to all staff.
- b) **planning** via regular reviews, specified resource inputs and training needs agreed between managers and staff.
- c) **action** via continuous training in which all employees have been involved.
- d) **evaluation** assessment as to effectiveness in relation to business goals involving top level management.(Fowler 1994).

Nor is this a one off exercise but one which involves three year review periods in order to retain the award.

This policy and its application in the university with the most experience of its implementation, is apparently driven by a proactive vice chancellor who has instituted procedures whereby the responsibilities of departmental heads and central staff development personnel is clarified in order to secure the award. Part of the responsibilities is that all staff be provided with information about the staff development programmes on offer which includes a clear statement of policy contained in the Staff Development Programme 1993/94 e.g. "all employees are entitled to, and are expected to undertake staff development" (p4), and have been allocated five staff development days per year for which they must be accountable to senior staff.

The role of senior staff is clearly stated in that the "programme will only work if managers manage the development process in the same way as they manage all other aspects of their role, including the briefing and debriefing of their staff before and after a "course" and ensuring the integration of the new knowledge/skill acquired "back at work"."(p6). Furthermore, there is a clear statement of policy in the strategic plan for example, "we believe in assisting staff to realise their potential contribution to the University and will support and encourage the personal development of staff" (University of Sunderland Strategic Plan 1993-4 to 1996-7).

In theory at least, the universities who adopt this formula will have a set of clearly defined objectives and staff development personnel and line managers clarity about their role in relation to them. It also embraces all staff and is a continuous process with regular evaluation points which will entail a more systematic monitoring of activity. Indeed, it could provide the framework for an integration and accreditation of what has been described earlier as integral

staff development with that of employer lead training programmes. More importantly in the light of the research findings to follow, it identifies the centrality of line management in the development of staff and could assist in the identification, challenge and training of senior staff who currently undermine provision. It also provides the framework for a more adequate costing system, particularly in regard to opportunity costs than currently pertains.

On the other hand it is important to bear in mind the modesty of the overall impact on individual members of staff. The minimum requirement of five days per annum for each member of staff in demonstrable development activity, although representing a considerable institutional investment is still marginal. It is also the case that some academics are already provided with opportunities for a much greater input as evidenced in the part - time certificated, teacher training courses offered in four of the universities. The significance here however is that two of the five universities are working towards a nationally defined minimum standard of staff development provision in which the current range of short courses, certificated teacher training and other development activities can be incorporated. It is also likely to raise the profile of the appraisal system within the universities concerned.

## 2. Certificated, Mandatory, Voluntary Systems.

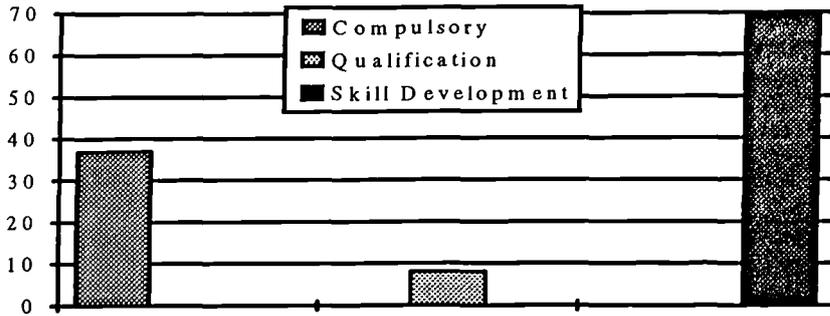
There are four universities among the five in this study who offer internally validated initial teacher training courses which carry awards in addition to a wide range of short courses, seminars and workshops. The teacher training courses are mainly, though not exclusively, addressed to newly appointed academic staff with no previous teacher training. Staff with no teacher training but with a minimum of two years teaching experience can also be exempt. One of the universities has a well defined accreditation system for further qualifications in

education to masters level. Two offer opportunities for staff to seek national accreditation through a scheme operated by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA formerly SCED) although the degree to which the scheme is widely recognised as a vehicle for national accreditation is open to debate.

One of the key elements in the four universities who have certificated initial teacher training programmes is in the degree to which participation by newly appointed academics is mandatory. The overall picture is not clear although there are evident moves on the part of management to build a requirement into the terms and conditions of staff. The lack of clarity is partly about the degree to which these are institutionally understood and adhered to and what sanctions are implemented for non compliance. This was evident from the 109 questionnaires completed by academics in the North East region when asked about the reasons for participation in staff development programmes and how they understood the terms and conditions of their employment. The messages emanating are very mixed both within and between institutions. In total, 37% said that one of the reasons for their involvement was that it was compulsory. Although 56% of the respondents claimed to know the existence of terms and conditions which influenced their participation, only 41% received information through the appointment process which suggests that policy is still far from systematised. (See Fig. 6.1 and 6.2)

Reasons for Involvement

Fig 6.1



(Note: Some gave more than one reason)

Knowledge of Terms/Conditions

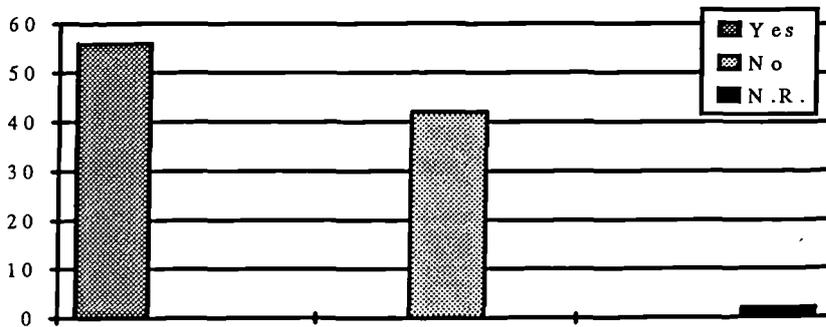
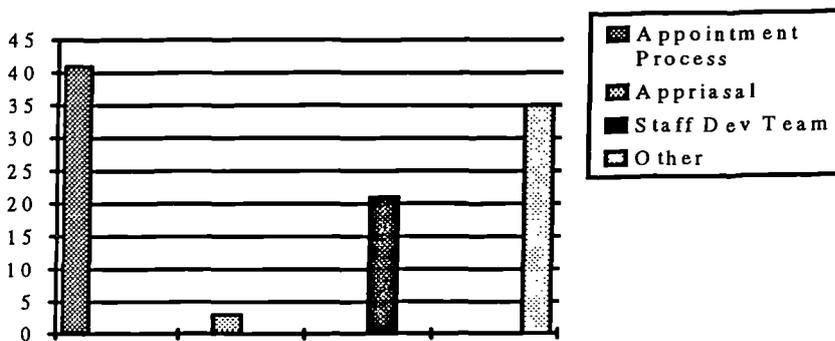


Fig 6.2a

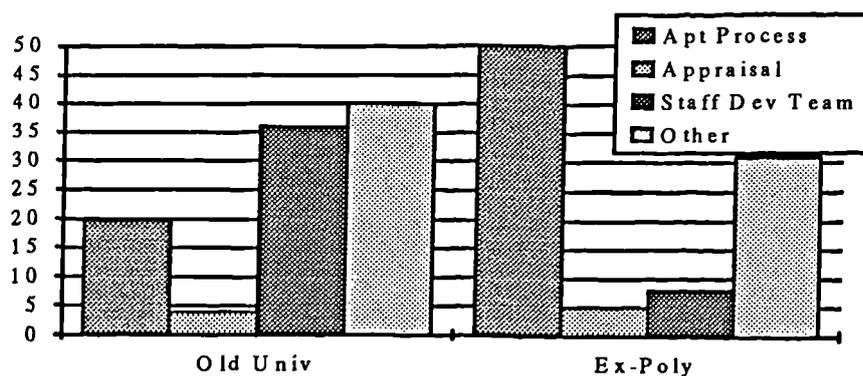
How Terms & Conditions Conveyed



All - 61 Respondents

Note: Other includes word of mouth/assumption/handbook

How Terms &amp; Conditions Conveyed By Type of Institution



Older University = 25)  
 Ex-Poly = 36)

The whole question of compulsory training for academic staff is fraught with complexity and to some extent the confused picture presented in this research mirrors the problems. Without going into too much detail about personnel and employment issues, there are doubts about the degree to which individual university managers could define terms and conditions of staff with meaningful sanctions, which have not been negotiated at a national level. Admittedly, part of the political agenda of the 1980s and 1990s was and is to eliminate national bargaining in favour of local agreements. It is however difficult to envisage refusal to attend a training course as a sacking offence or even to hold someone at probationary level unless incompetence could be proved. This is particularly so when there is evidence that many senior staff are resistant to the involvement of "their" staff in programmes if participation is seen to seriously impact on departmental availability.

In the "older" universities, the challenge to professional autonomy would be profound and this is illustrated in the work of MacDonald (1992). Exploring aspects of induction courses for the newly appointed in a survey of 51 universities and constituent colleges it was found that only six said that attendance was compulsory for academic staff and then with caveats of "in so far

as anything is...well, they're not done over if they don't come...difficult to enforce". It is however evident that attempts are being made to introduce mandatory staff development clauses into terms and conditions of employment. It could be argued that this is the only way that changes are effectively made to the, "taken for granted culture" which Matheson (1981) describes, in which subject knowledge in higher education has been assumed to confer a facility in its transmission. It could provide the groundwork for more effective monitoring of the spread of involvement in staff development programmes and more systematic evaluation of effectiveness. At the moment the data base of the staff development personnel contacted for this research suggests that it is less than complete. Although attempts are made to monitor staff involvement in terms of total numbers within a particular programme, it would be hard to arrive at for example, a departmental profile under the current arrangements.

Mandatory participation could also empower staff to participate and provide the framework for negotiation about the terms and conditions of employment which would allow them to do so, without constantly juggling impossible timetable commitments which many respondents described both in the questionnaire and in interview. The negative attitudes of many senior staff, particularly those who see involvement as a form of self indulgence, could in part be negated by mandatory involvement. On the other hand, one should not under-estimate the challenge to professional autonomy or the problems of staff development personnel in facilitating the development of (to use a military analogy) conscripts rather than volunteers.

#### Systems Based on Voluntarism.

One of the universities in this research operates a system which is rooted in the voluntary principle, although pressure is put on newly appointed staff to attend a short induction course

as soon after appointment as possible. It should also be noted that to a larger or lesser degree, this model operates alongside the mandatory, certificated processes in the other four universities. This is the most traditional of the models outlined and until recently probably the model employed by most if not all institutions of higher education. It was the model which predominated at the time of Mathesons' research (1981) and involved participants in a time commitment of anything between half a day and a week. It is a model that at its extremes he described thus - "that staff development is regarded in many institutions merely as a minimally financed, fire - fighting capability confined to a arena, namely teaching, in which there is little consensus that there is any vestige of smoke".(Matheson 1981).

Although it is not claimed here that a model rooted in voluntarism is inevitably a fire - fighting process, the tendency towards "ad hocery" in what is offered is more likely than when institutional decision makers have to define mandatory programmes and deal with thorny issues of terms and conditions of employment. Nor is it suggested that "ad hocery" is an entirely negative process, although the question of who decides what is and is not offered needs to be addressed. At a time of rapid change there is a case for arguing that short, responsive programmes, rather than those cast in stone might be advisable. On the other hand there is a distinct feel of pick and mix in the range of programmes that all the universities who operate this model engender irrespective of whether it is applied wholly or in part.

It is a system which fits a style of management which is more service oriented to expressed or assumed needs of members of staff, whose availability is essentially short term and spasmodic. It is also rooted in assumptions of professional autonomy and a trust that staff can define their own needs and interests. The major implications of this model apart from the pluses and minuses for individual members of staff, is its impact on the structural position of staff

development personnel and the way university staff in general view the role of the people appointed to operate the system. It rests on a relatively weak corporate agenda in comparison to those seeking Investment in People Awards. The implications of this model and the other models will be explored more fully in the following section focussed on structural and resource issues.

### **The Structural Position and Resourcing of Staff Development Activity.**

It is evident from the interviews and subsequent contacts with senior staff development personnel that there are distinct differences in the policy climate in which they work and how this impacts on how they see their role. All to a larger or lesser extent see themselves as part of the management structure of the university, offering a service function to academics but also with a clear understanding about the labour force requirements of the institution. This is most marked in the ex-polytechnic sector and reflected in their direct access and regular consultations with senior management. In this sense as could be expected, they operate closer to an industrial model than the "older" universities. Of the latter, the picture is less clear cut but with distinct differences between the two in the study.

If one assumes that institutional policy is most evident in the examination of the structural position of staff development personnel and the resources available to them some of these distinctions become a little clearer. The structural location of staff development personnel is no idle matter but sends out powerful messages within and between institutions about the way staff development is understood and practised. In fact it is argued in USDU Green Paper 8, (1994), discussing the location of special units but also by implication staff development personnel in general, that institutional location has major implications for the effectiveness of

staff development services. Indeed, "where a unit is located in the organisational (and physical) structure of a university can stimulate or stifle effectiveness" (USDU No. 8, 1994) and the report includes as stated above a typology in which ten key structures for staff development are defined. (see Appendix.2)

This not only serves to demonstrate the variety of institutional forms operating in higher education in the mid 1990s but is probably the best indicator of the absence of any national strategy for the pursuit of staff development. As stated earlier, according to the research undertaken by USDU "many older universities located staff development in personnel departments, in newer universities they tend to be located in central services alongside libraries and computing " and " in some universities the staff development unit is relatively independent and has direct links with senior management". Probably of greater importance is the view that "wherever the unit is located formally, it is recommended that it should have strong links with senior management" (USDU No. 8, 1994).

If one takes (USDU No 8. 1994) typology as a base line, there are two major models applicable to the five institutions in this study:-

1. The existence of a Educational Development Unit, headed by a director, responsible to a pro-vice chancellor with its locus in an independent resource centre. (model 1.a.) Two ex-polytechnic and one "older" universities in this study operate within this frame although all operate within the total personnel or human resource services. The crucial difference being that they are not physically located in Personnel Departments and direct line management is fluid across the senior management structure.

2. Two universities, one ex-polytechnic and one "older" share a similar structure for staff development, centrally located in the Personnel Department and responsible to the Director of the department, with no separate facilities for their activities. (closest to Partingtons' model 6). Both are accountable to on site Personnel Directors and both have contact with responsible pro-vice chancellors.

The degree to which the location of staff development within Personnel Departments is desirable is open to question. If staff development is seen as a means of achieving corporate objectives about human resource management and applied to all staff within the institution, it may well be the logical location but "academics are traditionally wary of administrators and a Staff Development Officer located within the administration may well lack the necessary credibility to be able to function effectively" (Smith and Smith 1993). On the other hand this research suggests that there are subtleties at work which need to be taken into account.

It is possible to argue that if staff development is obviously located in personnel functions in universities where traditional professional autonomy is strong, this would negatively impact more on the activities of staff development personnel than in universities accustomed to a higher degree of central managerialism. This is particularly important in a climate where professional cultural norms are being challenged. The strong impression gained during this research is that the departmental location of the worker in the most traditional of the five, negatively impacts more than it does on the staff of the ex-polytechnic university working in what appears on the surface, to be a similar structural location. It is also perhaps, not without significance that the former is a woman, the only female senior staff development officer of the

five. Questions perhaps need to be asked about the degree to which gender issues are a factor in the often thorny task of staff development.

Job titles are also indicative though not prescriptive. The three ex-polytechnic universities use managerial language, two of the seniors are "directors" and the third a "manager". In the two "older" universities the title is that of "adviser" indicative of a much more reactive institutional relationship than the proactive impression of the former group. On the other hand the interviews with these officers suggest that the four men in the study are in a much stronger institutional position and this is reflected in the resources to which they have access.

One of the crucial differences, in addition to location, are the resources both in terms of overall budget including the degree of autonomy over the budget, enjoyed by senior staff developers as well as in terms of staffing. Access to information of the total budget has proved difficult, not because of the unwillingness of staff to share information but because of the difficulties of assessing what is part of the established budget as distinct from monies forthcoming under specific programmes such as the Enterprise in Higher Education scheme. It is also not easy to understand the degree to which the budgets include staff costs and there appears to be considerable variation in the way total budgets are calculated. This apparently is no regional aberration but part of the national picture in this regard.

On safer ground is consideration of resources by the number of staff development personnel and the degree to which they enjoy their own physical space for the pursuit of their activities. Here there are marked differences and it is not without significance that the longest established separate units have the greatest access to direct resources in terms of personnel and physical space. Two of the most advantaged staff teams are located in ex-polytechnic universities. Two

of the least are located in one "older" and one ex-polytechnic university. Nor are the differences marginal, the 12 staff developers at one, the 9 full time equivalent including 4 core full-time staff at another plus administrative support, both teams with their own separate unit represent considerable institutional investment. This compares unfavourably with the rest. Of the three with less favourable staffing profiles, one has 2 staff including a current vacancy - the future of which is in doubt, another has 2 and the third has 3, although in regard to the latter there is an important proviso, in that the team has a separate, well equipped, staff development suite. Since the research was conducted there is evidence that two of the three least advantaged have secured increases in personnel.

This disproportion in staff development personnel cannot be accounted for purely in terms of academic staff numbers. The statistical information presented below suggests that it has more to do with historical development and cultural climate. Before however considering the question of staff size it needs to be borne in mind that at the time of writing the collation of statistics across what was the binary divide has not yet been systematised. The academic year 1993/94 is the last year that statistical information is presented separately, from 1994/95 all university and higher education college statistics will be collated by the Universities Funding Council. The following information therefore on staffing structures needs to be viewed with some caution.

There are other structural issues which need to be taken into account. For example, there is a greater use of part-time and temporary staff in the ex-polytechnic sector than in the rest of the universities and it is not always easy to understand how these categories of staff are being defined in the available statistics. It is also the case that some of the universities have a significant number of research only personnel, this is particularly so at the University of

Newcastle (496 in the year 1993/4 \* as compared to 34 at the University of Teesside +) which staff development personnel tend to include in their staffing figures. For convenience the research-only staff have been excluded from the following statistics, instead concentrating on staff who can be defined as academic staff e.g. lecturers and senior managers, although it is recognised that by including the latter there is some doubt about the definition.

|                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| University of Durham      | 779 staff*   |
| University of Newcastle   | 963 staff*   |
| University of Northumbria | 962 staff+++ |
| University of Sunderland  | 525 staff++  |
| University of Teesside    | 580 staff+   |

Source:

- \* University Statistical Record. 1993/4.
- +++ Facts and Figures 1993 - 94 University of Northumbria.( Note: this includes 99 defined as managers.)
- ++ Information provided by the Staff Development Manager.
- + Facts and Figures No 3 University of Teesside. (Note: this includes 37 defined as senior managers and 159 part-time lecturers.

Even if one interprets these statistics with some caution it is hard to make a case for the disparity in staff development personnel purely in terms of the numbers of academic or other staff employed in the institution. The two largest staff teams attribute this in large part to proactive and committed vice chancellors stemming back to the days when they were polytechnic directors. The other ex-polytechnic university claims the influence of a recently

appointed proactive vice chancellor and is only just beginning to reap the benefit in terms of increased resources.

The "older" university which is the most adequately resourced of the two in this category is harder to explain. One explanation could be the dominance of the medical and engineering schools within the university and their professional experience of training. The experiences of staff interviewed for this research however, suggests that senior staff are no more enamoured of their staff going on employer led courses than any other of the universities in this study.

The conclusions that one can draw from this part of the research findings is that staff development policy in each of the five universities is hard to reach. Mission statements are no guide but are best located within the context of institutional rhetoric addressed to more of an external than internal audience although there is evidence that many staff feel some commitment to the sentiments expressed. There are however discernible policy and practice trends operating which suggest that changes are afoot. In some universities these are taking the form of comprehensive minimum staff development time allocations across all staff. Another trend is the move to introduce mandatory initial teachers training for newly appointed staff who are deemed to be inexperienced. The degree to which these have been built into terms and conditions of employment that carry weight is still open to question.

Resources allocated to staff development are variable and not related to staff numbers. The method of calculating the cost of staff development is variable and suspect. The degree to which senior management is committed to staff development is equally variable and seriously affects the degree, shape and efficacy of staff development services. What appears to be crucial in understanding this plethora of policy and practice is the history, perceived status, position in

the higher education market place and the consequent cultural climate of each institution. Where tribal discourse (Becher 1989) is high the managerial discourse is weak and it is clear that academics, particularly senior academics can negotiate the degree to which managerial discourse and practice affects their lives depending on their place within the academic pecking order.

## **CHAPTER 7.**

### **LEARNING FROM PRACTICE 3. - the experiences of staff via questionnaire.**

This chapter describes and analyses the aspects of the research which attempts to understand the experiences of individual staff who have within the past three years been involved in employer lead staff development programmes. Gaining access to academic or any other group of staff in what are large, complex organisations is difficult. To focus on staff who have been involved in employer lead staff development initiatives simplifies the task a little. On the other hand, staff development is not here seen as confined to those activities which are manifested in courses, seminars and workshops organised by staff development personnel. Consequently, although the selection criteria was focused on their involvement in programmes of this nature, the research attempts to work towards a wider understanding of how staff understand their career path and the role if any, of employer lead development opportunities they have experienced. It is not intended as a participant evaluation of the efficacy of such programmes, but more as an attempt to increase understanding and empathy with the stated choices and priorities of staff.

The methods used have been described in Chapter 5. To recapitulate - 265 members of staff drawn from 5 universities were, during the first week of April 1994, sent via internal mail, questionnaires and a covering letter explaining the purpose and anticipated value of their participation in the research. Selection of the recipients was carried out by staff development personnel and four of the universities selected 50 members of "their" staff who had been involved in a range of employer lead initiatives and the fifth involved the entire 65 members of a newly established initial teacher training course. In regard to the latter, additional elements relevant to the course were included in the questionnaire and accompanying letter.

Of the 265 members of staff contacted, 109 (41%) returned completed questionnaires, of those 52 (47.7%) agreed to be interviewed. In the event 47 (43%) were interviewed between June and December 1994, all but one at their place of work. The five who were not interviewed had either left their employment or were unobtainable during the interview period. It needs to be noted at this stage that no claims are made that the questionnaire respondents or those interviewed are representative of their organisations. Non response is as significant as response and no attempt has been made to gauge why those initially approached, chose not to be involved.

It would have been helpful if staff development officers had been asked to retain a list of those they selected for the postal questionnaire. This would have facilitated the sending of a general reminder which might have increased the response rate. This would not however have lessened the problem of representation given the size of these organisations and the limits of the research design. What it does indicate, is how 109 academics at a particular point in time, respond to a number of questions about their career and their involvement in employer lead staff development initiatives. The interviews supplement this information and the whole presents opportunities for what are believed to be interesting conclusions.

As mentioned in the previous chapter the questionnaire responses will be mainly explored in this chapter and the interview responses mainly in Chapter 8. Where relevant and to avoid needless repetition some of the findings will include insights from both methods.

## 1. Responses to the Postal Questionnaire.

These will be presented highlighting a number of key areas of enquiry. First in terms of their distribution between the universities contacted, by age and gender. This will be followed by a focus on their previous experience and will include aspects of their academic and professional qualifications, first experience of higher education as a student and as a worker. Their current terms and conditions of employment are then explored particularly in regard to whether they are on fixed term or "permanent" contracts. This will also be related to whether their involvement in staff development programmes is a mandatory part of their employment.

Their involvement in staff development is explored in a number of ways, experience prior to employment; their current or recent involvement, the degree to which they are motivated by awards; whether they think their participation will lead to promotion or salary awards whether their motivation is affected by who actually conducts the programmes particularly between internal as compared with external facilitators. The next area of focus is on how they define themselves as academics and where they experience most pressure. An attempt to gauge the extent of the pressure is explored in questions on stress and if evident, its manifestation and source.

This is related to the degree to which they think staff development can or could help them deal more effectively with the pressures they experience. The degree to which they are supported in their involvement in programmes by departmental colleagues is discussed and their general opinions sought of the programmes in which they have participated. All will be discussed where relevant either within the context of the individual institution or type of institution e.g. "older", ex-polytechnic or as a totality. The universities involved have been numbered 1 to 5.

The total number of respondents by institution, by age and gender are presented below (see Fig. 7.1a and 7.1b). It is difficult to account for the variation between institutions but it should be noted that Inst. 2 is the one to which 65 questionnaires were distributed. Whether the length of the questionnaire or its composition were factors is difficult to gauge. The interviews held in this university confirm that the course had been thoroughly evaluated "in - house" quite recently and there was some sensitivity about the way staff responded to the process. As far as the total respondents are concerned it should be noted that 85% were between the ages of 26 and 45 years and the gender distribution in total suggests that women were more ready to respond than men or are disproportionately represented in staff development programmes. The lower representation of women in the higher education workforce needs to be borne in mind and the fact that staff development personnel were asked to ensure in the distribution, that staff should be selected on the basis of gender in proportion to their representation in the programmes. The totals below refer to proportions within the response rate not the distribution rate.

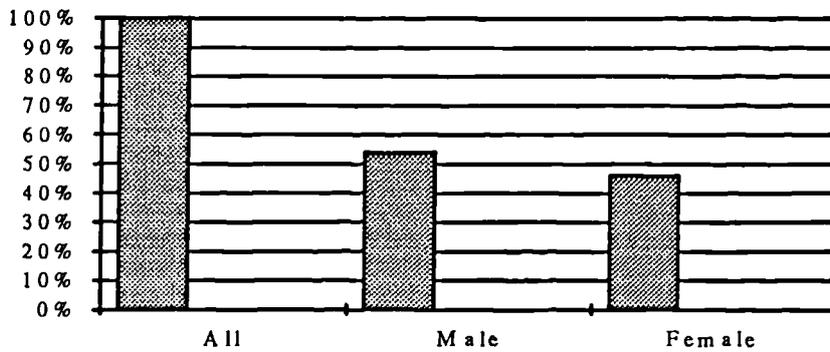
**Fig 7.1a**

**Age & Gender of Respondents by Institution and in Total**

| Inst | 20 - 25 |   |     | 26 - 35 |   |     | 36 - 45 |   |     | 45+ |   |     | All |                      |
|------|---------|---|-----|---------|---|-----|---------|---|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|----------------------|
|      | M       | F | TOT | M       | F | TOT | M       | F | TOT | M   | F | TOT |     |                      |
| 1.   |         |   | 1   | 6       | 6 | 12  | 6       | 4 | 10  | 2   | 1 | 3   | 25  | Male 12<br>Female 11 |
| 2.   | 1       | 1 | 2   | 9       | 6 | 15  | 2       | 2 | 4   | 2   |   | 2   | 23  | Male 14<br>Female 9  |
| 3.   |         |   |     | 10      | 7 | 17  | 3       |   | 3   |     |   |     | 20  | Male 13<br>Female 7  |
| 4.   | 2       |   | 2   | 2       | 4 | 6   | 3       | 5 | 8   | 2   |   | 2   | 18  | Male 9<br>Female 9   |
| 5.   |         |   |     | 4       | 7 | 11  | 3       | 4 | 7   | 2   | 3 | 5   | 23  | Male 9<br>Female 14  |
| Tot  |         |   | 5   |         |   | 61  |         |   | 32  |     |   | 12  | 109 |                      |

Fig 7.1b

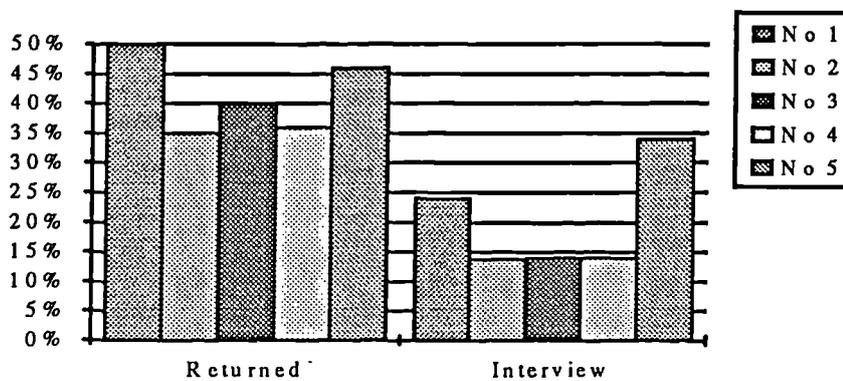
Gender of Respondents Across all Institutions

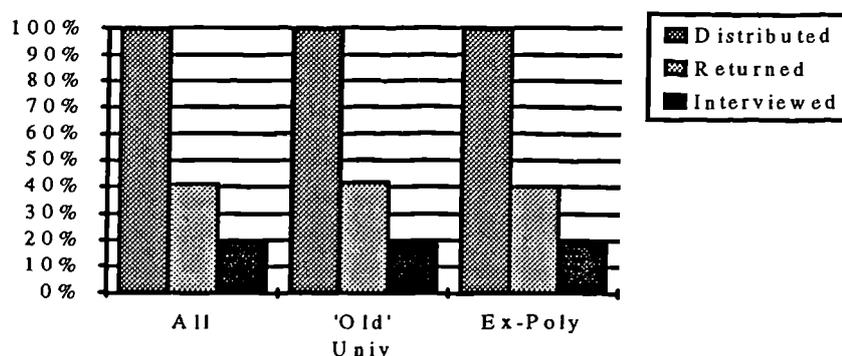


If one examines the response rate in terms of the questionnaire and expressed willingness to be interviewed by institution (see Fig. 7.2) interesting questions are posed by the higher response rate both in terms of questionnaire and interview in No 1 and No 5. Of course, one is in the realms of speculation but it may be of significance that both institutions have been linked with a new college initiative 'off site' and the researcher's home base is in one of them - in short, supporting home produce. If one looks at the response rate by type of institution, in this regard "older" as distinct from ex-polytechnic university, the response rate is remarkably similar. (see Fig 7.3.)

Fig 7.2

% of Returned Questionnaires by Institution  
% of Interviews as Part of the Total Distributed



**% of Returned Questionnaires****% of Returned Questionnaires by 'Older' University and Ex-polytechnic****% of Interviews in Each Category**

In trying to understand current experiences of staff, part of the motivation which underpinned some of the questions was to gauge the previous experience of staff. This was partly to explore questions of reproduction of the kind explored by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), whether there were for example any patterns evident in the spread of qualifications, and any similarities between experiences as a student and as a member of staff? Another area of interest was the degree to which they had previous experience of employment in higher education. This has implications for the way academics carry out the roles expected of them, how these are understood and what kind of role models influence their practice. It also has implications for staff development personnel in assessing how experience can be utilised in further development.

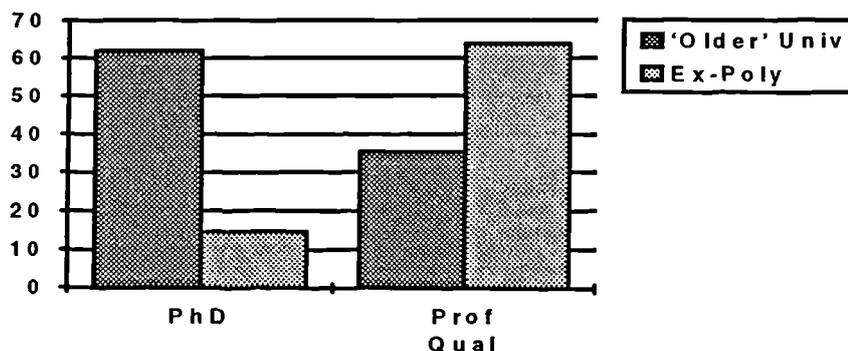
Here the distinctions between the "older" and the ex-polytechnic universities began to emerge, although because of the problems of representation referred to earlier, there is no way of knowing if this is an aberrant feature of these respondents or "saying" something more important about workforce profiles. The qualifications of respondents show two distinct patterns if assessed by the number of doctorates and professional qualifications held. The first

is the 62% of staff with doctorates and the 35% with professional qualifications in the "older" universities as compared with 15% of staff with doctorates and the 64% with professional qualifications in the ex-polytechnic sector. (See Fig 7.4a and b). It should also be borne in mind that one of the "older" universities in this group is dominated by medical and engineering schools and the consequent number of professional qualifications may not be an accurate reflection of incidence in "older" universities generally. Interestingly enough subject orientation and departmental location presented no discernible pattern either in the total response rate or in terms of specific responses.

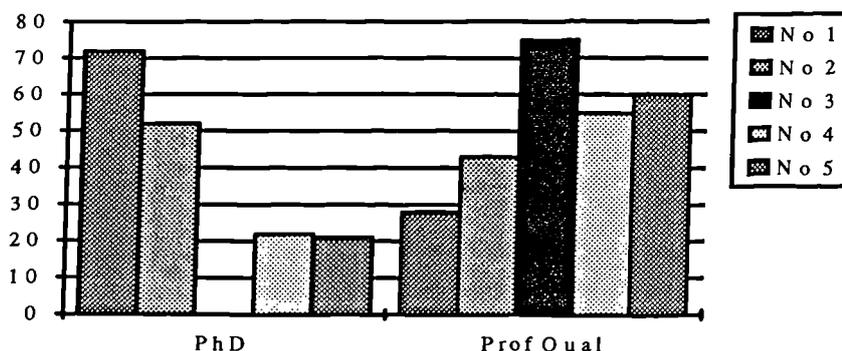
On the other hand, the differences between the "older" and ex-polytechnic universities are not surprising given the different histories of the two types of institution. It needs to be related to the traditional route to appointment via the doctorate in "older" universities particularly since the second World War and the importance given to professional qualifications and experience in the polytechnics. The significance for this research is that these qualification patterns appear to impact on the way staff see the value of some forms of staff development, particularly in regard to research. These issues will be explored later in regard to questionnaire responses and in the section which is focused on the interviews.

Fig 7.4a

Qualifications of Respondents. (PhD & Professional Qualifications (by binary divide location)).



Qualifications of Respondents (PhD & Professional Qualification) by Institution



Pursuing the reproduction theory further, the questions that try to gauge previous experience both in terms of being a student and where applicable, to previous higher education employment, also raises comparability questions between the two wings of the ex- binary divide. The overwhelming number of those respondents who work in and also read for their first degrees in "older" universities is marked. Non of the respondents in these universities claimed to have been educated in a polytechnic. In the ex-polytechnic sector the picture is more complex, 44% read for first degrees at "older" universities compared to 54% at a polytechnic.

When one considers the question of how many work in the institution in which they read for their first degrees, some potentially fascinating issues are posed about the experience base upon which staff are working. Of the total respondents, 21% fitted this category, comprising 34% of the respondents from one of the "older" universities and 25% of the respondents from one of the ex-polytechnic universities. (See Fig 7.5) It is not possible to tell if this is reflected in the total academic workforce of these institutions. Further it does not adequately illustrate the range of higher education experience that the staff member may have enjoyed, given that the question was focused on first degrees. It does suggest however, that there are interesting

reproduction type questions that could be explored in recruitment patterns which have implications for staff development.

Fig 7.5

- a) First Higher Education Qualification by Location  
 b) Previous Education in Current Employing Institutions

|    | a                  |       | a            |         | a          |        | Educ/Empl b   |         |
|----|--------------------|-------|--------------|---------|------------|--------|---------------|---------|
|    | 'Older' University |       | Ex-Poly/F.E. |         | Not Stated |        | Own Univ/Poly |         |
| 1. | 24                 | (96%) |              |         | 1          |        | 2             | (8%)    |
| 2. | 21                 | (91%) |              |         | 2          |        | 8             | (34%)   |
| 3. | 8                  | (40%) | 12           | (60%)   |            |        | 5             | (25%)   |
| 4. | 10                 | (55%) | 8            | (44.4%) |            |        | 3             | (16.6%) |
| 5. | 9                  | (39%) | 13           | (56.5%) | 1          |        | 5             | (21.7%) |
| T  | 72                 | (66%) | 33           | (30.2%) | 4          | (3.6%) | 23            | (21.1%) |

**Previous Higher Education Teaching Experience by Institutional Type**

|    | 'Older' University |         | Ex-Poly/F.E. |         | None |         |
|----|--------------------|---------|--------------|---------|------|---------|
| 1. | 14                 | (56.0%) | 3            | (12.0%) | 8    | (32.0%) |
| 2. | 9                  | (39.1%) | 2            | (8.6%)  | 12   | (52.1%) |
| 3. | 2                  | (10.0%) | 2            | (10.0%) | 16   | (80.0%) |
| 4. | 2 *                | (11.1%) | 6            | (33.3%) | 10   | (55.5%) |
| 5. | 2 *                | (8.6%)  | 5            | (21.7%) | 16   | (69.5%) |
| T  | 29                 | (26.6%) | 18           | (16.5%) | 56   | (51.3%) |

\* Some in both.

**'Older' University Staff by Previous Teaching Experience**

| Total | Older University |         | Ex-Poly/F.E. |         | None |         |
|-------|------------------|---------|--------------|---------|------|---------|
| 48    | 23               | (47.9%) | 5            | (10.4%) | 18   | (37.5%) |

**Ex-Polytechnic and other H.E. Staff by Previous Teaching Experience**

| Total | Older University |        | Ex-Poly/F.E. |         | None |         |
|-------|------------------|--------|--------------|---------|------|---------|
| 61    | 6                | (9.8%) | 13           | (21.3%) | 42   | (68.8%) |

There were a number of questions posed which not only helped to build up a profile of those who participated but also offered clues to motivation in staff development activities. The first of these was how long they had been employed in their current institution and whether they were employed on fixed term contracts or not. Another way into the general area of motivation was to pose questions about whether involvement in programmes or courses was mandatory or

not and how they came to understand this to be the case. This line of enquiry performed two key functions - one, in assessing their understanding of the terms and conditions of their employment but also, about university practice in relation to mandatory staff development. The final part of this element of the research was to explore how far their involvement in employer lead staff development was motivated by whether it was certificated, whether the involvement of internal as distinct from external development personnel was a factor and if there was an expectation of rewards either in terms of promotion or increments by their involvement.

The impact of fixed term contracts on the motivation of those in these circumstances is under-researched but common sense would suggest that they have somewhat different priorities than those "permanently" appointed. The folklore reads that one spends the first year learning the ropes, the second year producing to effect and the third year looking for the next contract. In staff development terms one could expect that fixed term contract staff might have less encouragement from seniors to be involved. On the other hand contract staff might have more incentive to do so, particularly on award bearing courses in order to increase their marketability. Unfortunately, whether because the research design was not sufficiently sophisticated or because there is no causal link between contract and motivation, it was not possible to detect a link in the findings.

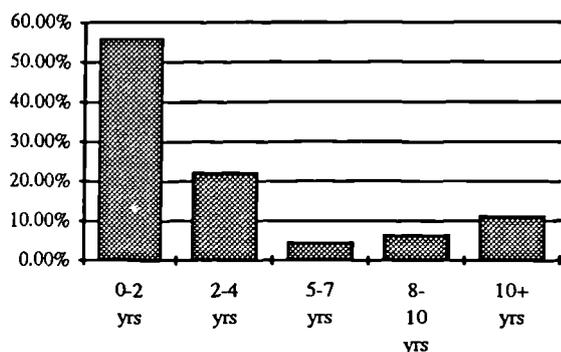
What it does indicate is that 28% of respondents were on fixed term contracts, 33% of whom were "older" university staff compared with 25% from ex- polytechnic universities. In terms of how long they had been employed, the findings confirm the general impression of all the staff development literature referred to above, of the bulk of participants being the newly appointed with 77% employed for under 4 years and 55% for less than two years. (See Fig 7.6)

Fig 7.6

**Terms & Length of Employment by Institution**

|    | Fixed Term Contract |                 | Length of Service |         |         |          |         |       |     |
|----|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|-------|-----|
|    | Yes                 | No              | -2 yrs            | 2-4 yrs | 5-7 yrs | 8-10 yrs | 10+ yrs |       |     |
| 1. | 9                   | 16              | 10                | 9       | 1       | 2        | 3       |       |     |
| 2. | 7                   | 16              | 19                | 2       | 1       |          | 1       |       |     |
| 3. | 4                   | 16              | 16                | 4       |         |          |         |       |     |
| 4. | 13                  | 13 2 not stated | 8                 | 4       |         | 2        | 4       |       |     |
| 5. | 15                  | 15 2 not stated | 8                 | 5       | 3       | 3        | 4       |       |     |
|    | 31                  | 28%             | 76                | 69.7%   | 61      | 24       | 5       | 7     | 12  |
|    |                     |                 |                   |         | 55.9%   | 22%      | 4.5%    | 6.42% | 11% |

**Length of Service (All)**



**Total % Contract staff by type of Institution**

'Older' Univ 33.3%  
 Ex-Polytechnic 24.5%

The degree to which there were mandatory policies in operation was discussed in Chapter 6, in looking at institutional policy, this included information illustrated in Fig 6.1a and b and 6.2a and b. To briefly recapitulate, 37% of respondents said the reason for their involvement in staff development programmes was because it was mandatory but the evidence suggests that this information is not always conveyed through the appointment process. Furthermore, sanctions for non-compliance were not articulated and there were no reports of any being implemented. The implications for staff development personnel in mounting programmes in a

mandatory climate or one rooted in voluntarism needs further investigation. In the discussion on this issue in Chapter 6, emphasis was placed on the possible empowerment process that mandatory involvement could confer on staff, although the interview material will illustrate this is not the case for everyone. The general impression from interviews with staff development personnel who operated within a mandatory framework, no matter how incomplete at the level of institutional practice, is that it helped them to pursue a more coherent development policy.

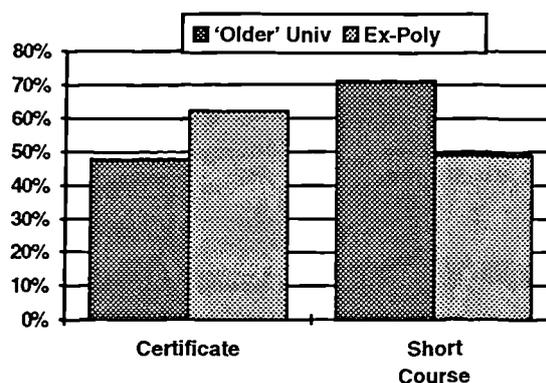
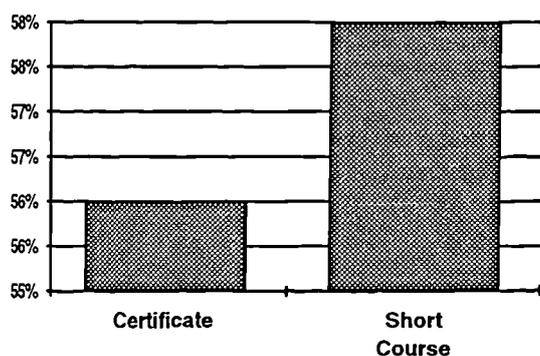
The degree to which staff are motivated by whether the programmes are certificated or not is complex. First one needs to understand the pattern of involvement between certificated and non award bearing elements. Fig. 7.7a indicates that 56% of respondents had experience of certificated courses in current employing institutions and 58% of short, non-award-bearing inputs.

Fig 7.7a

**Types of Staff Development - Current**

All

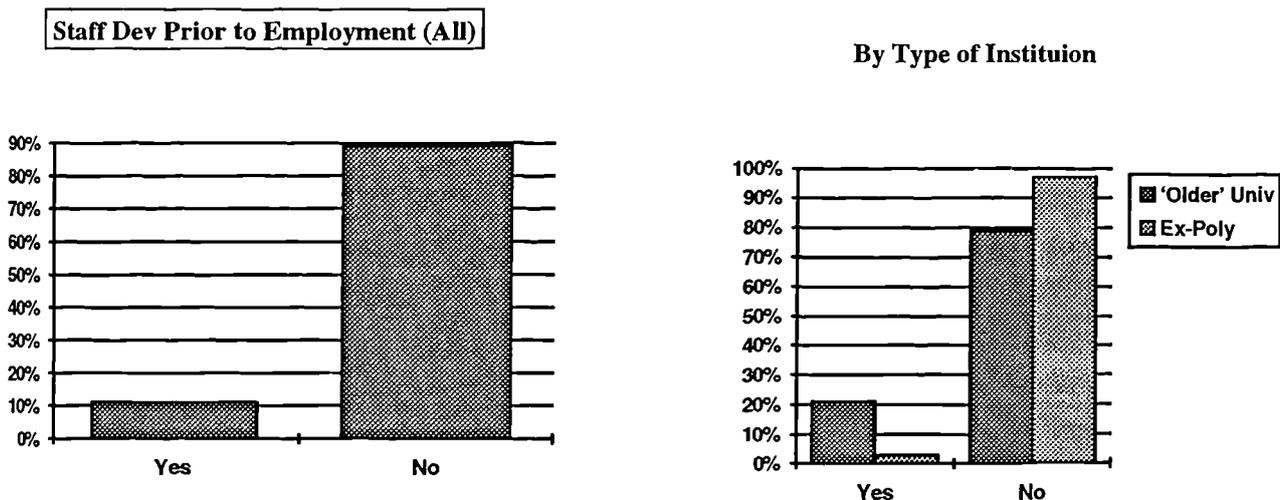
**By Type of Institution**



The distinctions between the "older" universities and the rest was again evident although one needs to bear in mind that one of the former does not offer any award bearing courses, so the profile is distorted. For the vast majority 79% of the "older" University respondents and 97%

of the ex-polytechnic universities staff, this was their first experience of staff development of this type in higher education. This alone suggests that staff development personnel carry a great deal of responsibility in making sure that new participants have a positive experience. See 7.7b

Fig 7.7b



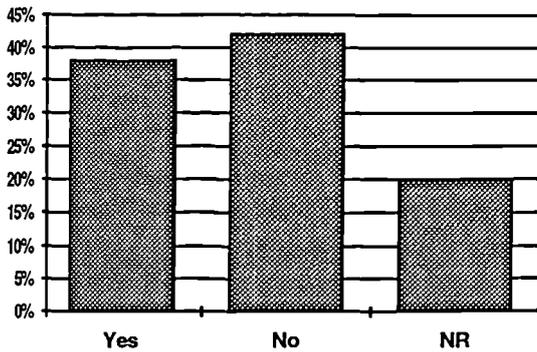
When asked whether certification increased their motivation, 20% registered no opinion so the statistics need to be viewed with caution. Of those who did respond, 50% of respondents from the "older" and 35% from the ex-polytechnic universities said their motivation was not increased by awards. There are a number of possible explanations - in general these are highly qualified staff, the driving force of their careers is subject oriented and the level of the awards apart from those offered at masters level are modest. In regard to higher degrees in educational practice the interview evidence suggests that motivation for staff development would not be increased by the provision of a higher degree award system. One interviewee reflected the general response - "I am a biologist, a higher degree in education would do nothing for my career". On the other hand, one cannot ignore the possibility that the negative approach to

awards voiced by many could be based on a reluctance to attribute one's motivation to award systems. See 7.7c

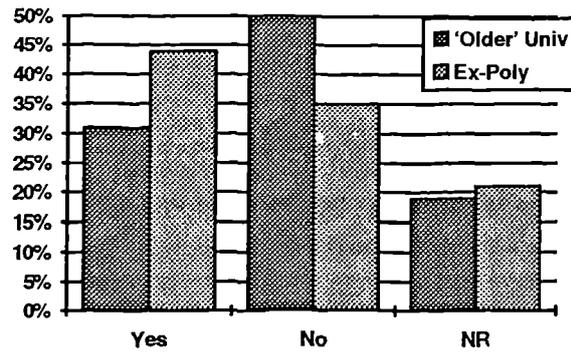
Fig 7.7c

Motivated by Awards

(All)



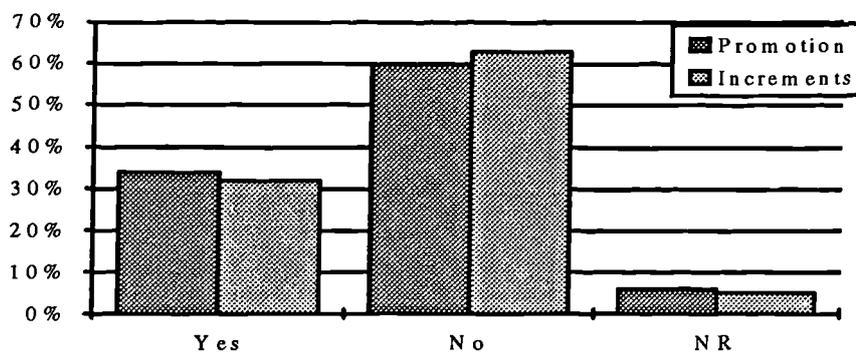
By Type of Institution



NR = Not registered

The apparent lack of interest in award-bearing courses of this nature by many staff however, is probably most closely related to anticipated reward systems through promotion and salary increases. The responses indicate that most staff believe that promotion issues are fuelled by research and not by teaching skill development. There were, however, differences between staff in the "older" as compared with the ex-polytechnic universities, 68% in the former and 51% in the latter thought that their involvement would not lead to promotion. A similar distinction is evident in regard to increments, where 75% in the "older" universities thought there was no connection between training courses and financial rewards compared to 54% of respondents from other universities. See 7.8

### Expectations of Promotion/Increments as a Result of In-house Training



It needs to be borne in mind however that the differences in response may be reflective of different practice in regard to rewards between the two sectors. Some of the staff in ex-polytechnic universities met during the interview stage, had been very rapidly promoted, some in their first year of employment and none with a discernible research profile. In fact one of the distinct impressions gained from the interviews was that promotion prospects in the ex-polytechnic sector appeared somewhat brighter than in the "older" universities with several references among staff of the ex - polytechnics mentioning their own rapid promotion or the creation of a number of chairs or senior lectureships. This suggests that there might be some interesting research among senior staff particularly in regard to how many in the "older" universities are seeking promotion in the ex-polytechnics.

On the other hand, as far as this research is concerned there is some doubt about how promotion was interpreted, several of the comments suggest that it was seen as passing probation. More clarity in the questions posed would have been helpful here. There is also some indication that many staff particularly from the ex-polytechnic universities said "yes" to the questions because participation in staff development **ought** to lead to promotions and/or increments rather than it would. Comments of the order "it shows commitment", "I will be

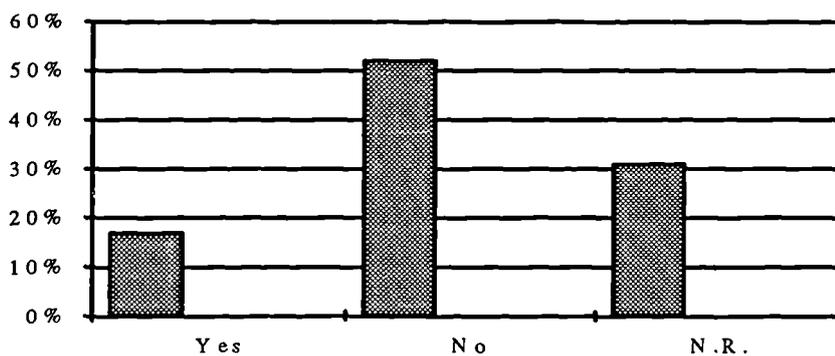
better at my job", "the department will benefit" were quite common. This suggests that there is more pessimism in this regard than the statistics indicate.

The importance for staff development personnel of findings of this nature are that if they are looking to institutionalised incentives as an aid to furthering their work, one of the problems is that research is seen as the major vehicle whilst the main focus of the award-bearing courses is on teaching skill. In fact some of the respondents commented on the negative impact of their participation - "could cost me research time, hence promotion", "being a good teacher is not recognised in this university, research is the key". On the other hand, they can draw some consolation from the fact that only 17% of those who responded to specific questions on who conducts the programmes, would have preferred an external facilitator even though 31% of the total respondents did not register a preference. When external facilitators were preferred this was only in relation to specific-subject-based inputs. (See Fig. 7.9 )

Fig 7.9

**Views and Knowledge of In-house Training**

Preference for External Trainers



A number of the questions were designed to elicit how staff defined themselves in academic terms; where they felt the most pressure and the degree to which they felt that staff development programmes could help them to deal with the pressures most effectively. Some attempt was made to gauge pressure by stress levels and how it was manifested. The questions

focused on academic orientation were partly descriptive e.g. mainly teaching, mainly research etc. and partly statistical in asking staff to register their time allocation between teaching, research, administration and course development. As far as the attempt to label their orientation is concerned there were marked differences between the two types of university in this study and reflective of their differing traditions and histories. This is shown mainly by the 10% of staff in "older" universities as compared with 62% from ex-polytechnic universities who defined their role as mainly teaching. Conversely, the 75% of "older" university staff and 34% of ex-polytechnic staff who defined their role as a combination of teaching and research. (See Fig 7.10)

Fig 7.10

**Academic Orientation by Type of Institution - as % of responses per institution**

|                | Mainly Teaching | Mainly Research | Teaching/<br>Research | Other    |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 'Older' Univ   | 5 (10%)         | 6 (12.5%)       | 36 (75%)              | 1 (2%)   |
| Ex-Polytechnic | 38 (62%)        | -               | 21 (34%)              | 2 (1.2%) |

**Academic Orientation by Institution**

| Inst  | Mainly Teaching | Mainly Research | Teaching/<br>Research | Other    | Notes   |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------|---|
| 1.    | 2               | 3               | 20                    | 1 *      | Course leader as well                             |
| 2.    | 3               | 3               | 16                    | 1<br>2 * | Academic support Medical<br>Practice Head of Dept |
| 3.    | 12              | -               | 7                     | 1        | Consultancy                                       |
| 4.    | 9               | -               | 9                     | 1 *      | Team leader                                       |
| 5.    | 17              | -               | 5                     | 1<br>2 * | Course Development<br>Admin, Union Rep            |
| Total | 43 (39.4%)      | 6 (5.5%)        | 57 (52.2%)            | 3 (2.7%) |   |

\* = included twice in statistics

The significance of this will be seen in later evidence about work pressures and in the interview responses in which there are clear signs of academic drift of the kind articulated by Burgess and Pratt (1974) with attempts by managers in ex-polytechnic universities to raise their

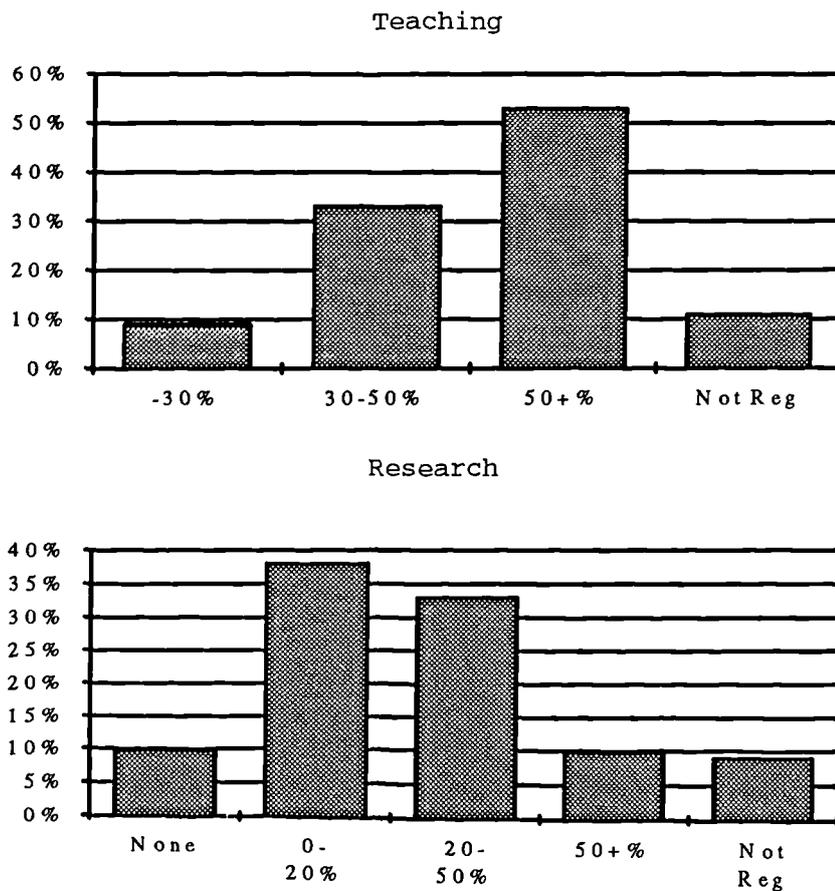
research profile. Here one can see the challenge to the traditional culture referred to above being subverted by the jostling for status and resources which has probably increased since the removal of the binary divide. It is also significant in the differing ways that pressure is experienced about the same functional area in the two types of institution.

The picture presented about orientation is reinforced in the answers about time allocation though it should be noted that some staff claimed to work over 100% of their time. This shows a higher teaching and administrative profile and a lower research profile for ex-polytechnic staff than that of staff in "older" universities. (See Fig 7.11a and b)

Fig 7.11(a)

**Allocation of Time - Teaching, Research, Admin**

All



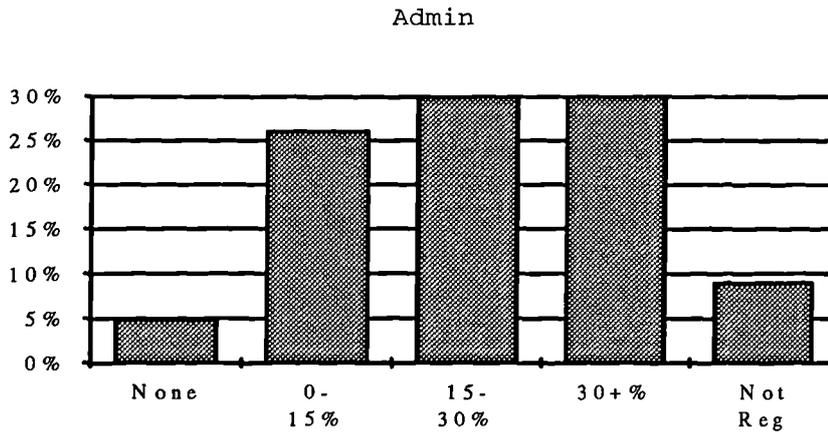
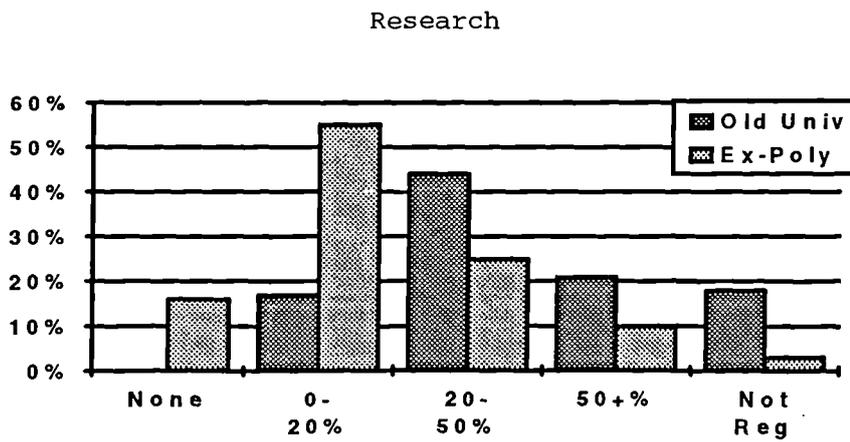
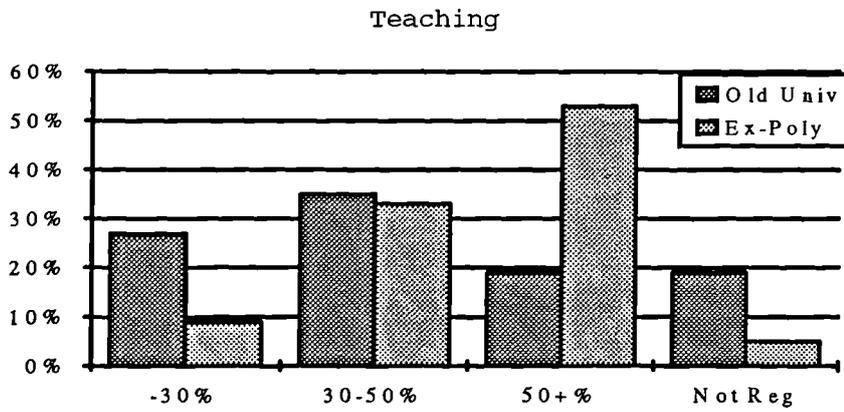
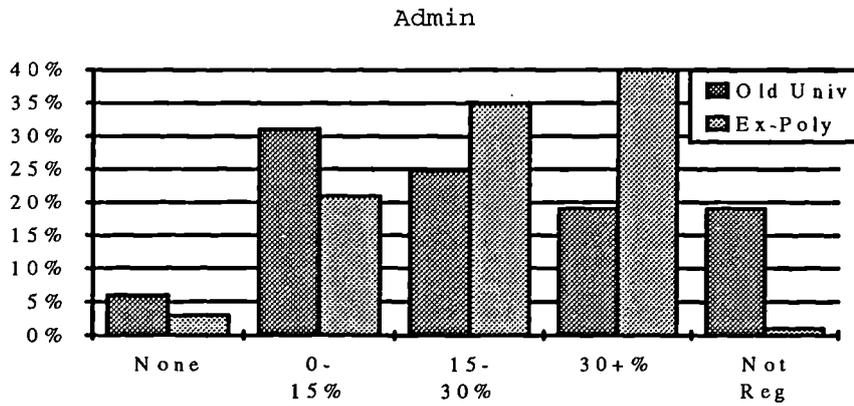


Fig 7.11(b)

Allocation of Time - Teaching, Research, Admin by Type of Institution



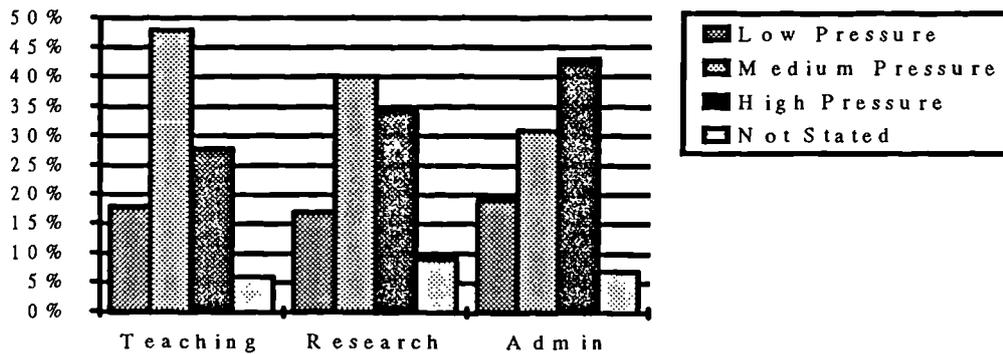


Further indications are presented in the answers to questions about work pressure. Here the information is provided in relation to scores designed to elicit information on low, medium and high levels of pressure and related to type of university. The high levels of pressure registered on research among staff of "older" universities and the high levels on administration of ex-polytechnic staff is worthy of mention and raises questions about the effective utilisation of skilled staff in the latter. (See Fig. 7.12).

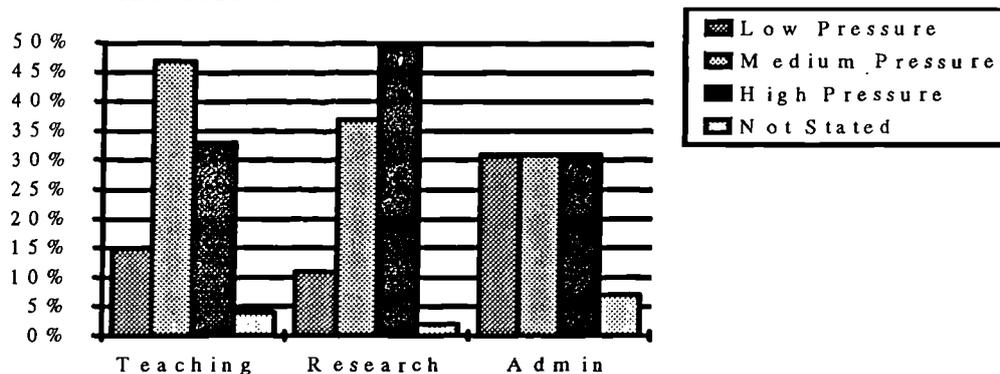
Fig 7.12

**Pressure of Work**

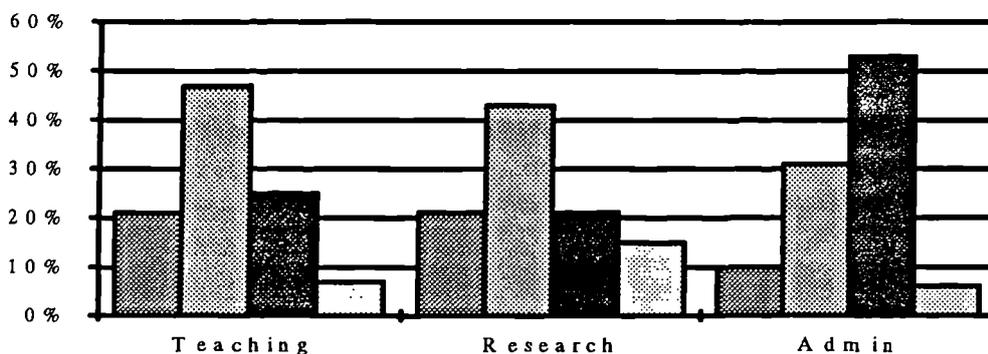
All



'Older' Universities



Ex-Polytechnic Universities



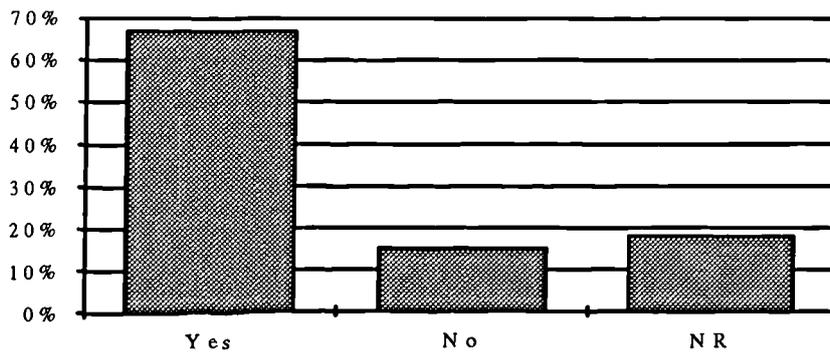
It also raises questions about whether the type and range of courses on offer in the ex-polytechnic universities carry a higher administrative load, which may well be the case if they include professional training with practice placement elements. If this is the case the responses to the value of training to relieve pressure is significant, particularly in relation to the low assessment of the participants to staff development in administration.

The questions about work pressures included questions on stress experienced and some attempt was made to assess the seriousness by asking participants to indicate the form it took. This is a particularly difficult area of enquiry because of the problems of definition and interpretation. For example, in regard to the latter, one of the respondents wrote "no" with such evident vehemence that one doubted the accuracy of the assessment. On the other hand, many people were in undoubted stress conditions with manifestations which should not be

ignored. The majority of respondents (67%) claimed to experience stress with the most common symptoms manifested in disrupted sleep patterns and tense domestic situations. Some, bulimia and disorientation "finding myself in places and doing things without knowing why" for example, seem more serious. (See Fig. 7.13 ). It should be noted that there were no discernible differences between the two types of university referred to above.

Fig 7.13

**Stress Experienced**



Symptoms

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Insomnia        | Disorientation |
| Bulimia         | Tiredness      |
| Illness         | Guilt          |
| Lack of Control | Overwhelmed    |
| Not Prepared    | No Home Life   |

When questioned about whether staff training could help to relieve some of these pressures the overall response was negative. Skill development in teaching and learning tended to be identified as most helpful but less so among staff of the "older" universities. The most notable response was the low value placed on staff development in regard to research with only 2% of "older" university staff and 3% of the rest allocating high value to staff development in this area. The reasons are complex and will be explored more fully in the section examining the interview responses and have a lot to do with the differing traditions of research activity and recruitment in the two types of institution.

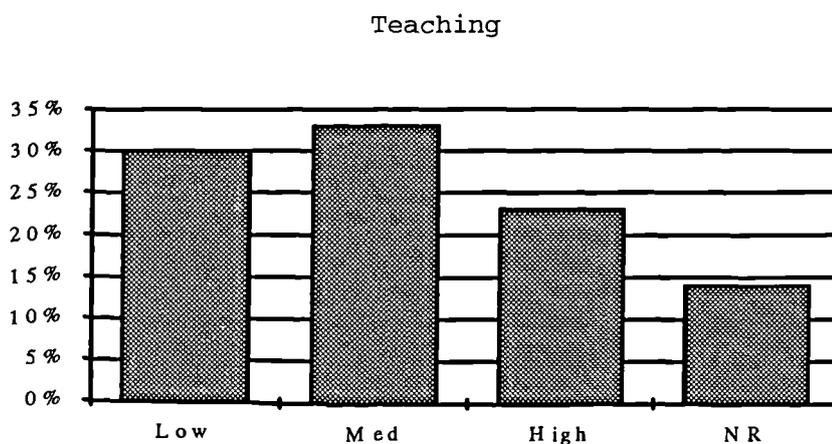
As far as opinion on whether training could relieve stress the comments on questionnaires point to the fact that many thought it could **add** to pressure given the fact that time constraints and the pressure of fitting everything in was a constant theme. (See Fig 7.14 and 7.15) Another factor in the low opinion of training to relieve stress seemed more related to the problems of implementing practice and this was well summarised by a contribution from one of the ex-polytechnics -

"I am frankly not terribly convinced that in - house training could reduce the stress and pressure. Too many demands are made on academic staff simultaneously which cannot simply be resolved by a consultant, e.g. lack of space, inadequate furniture, lack of funding, distances to be covered between teaching accommodation, or meeting places.. lack of technical equipment, insufficient and inadequate teaching accommodation, no time to liaise with colleagues etc., etc."

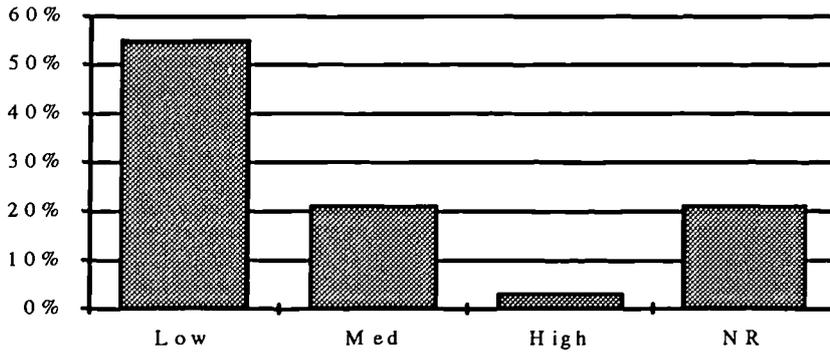
The information in 7.14 and 7.15 refers to low, medium and high opinion of the efficacy of training in regard to work pressure.

**Fig 7.14**

**Degree to Which Training Could Help With Work Pressures (A11)**



Research



Admin

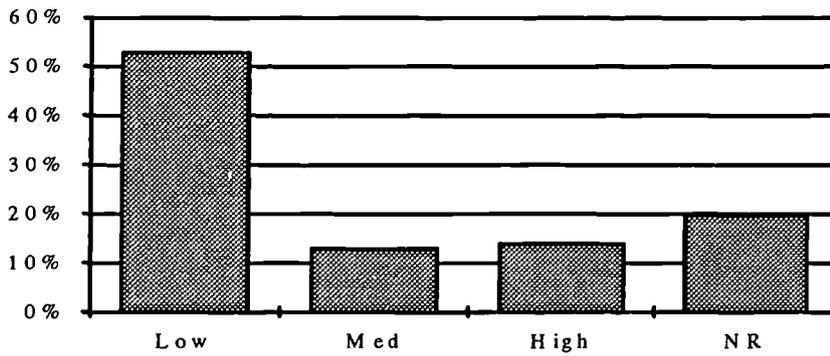
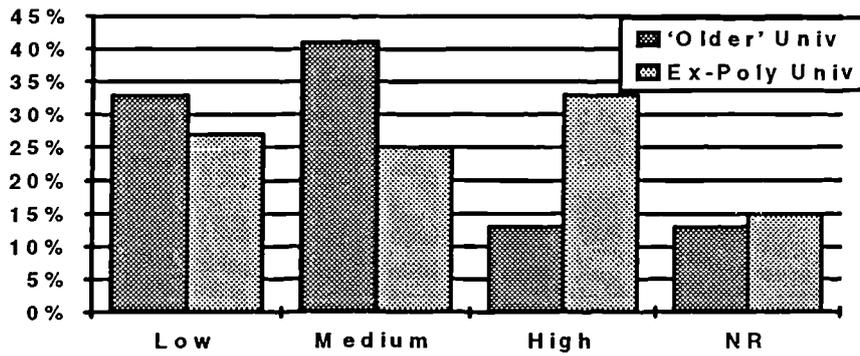


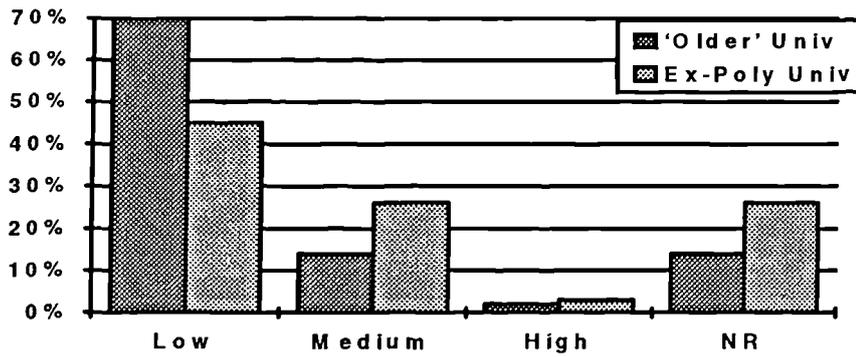
Fig 7.15

Degree to Which Training Could Help With Work Pressures - by type of Institution

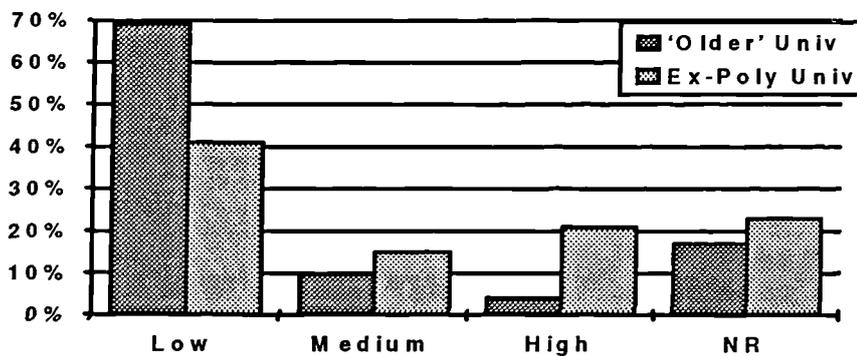
Teaching



### Research



### Admin



This raises questions about the kind of support that staff receive from their departmental colleagues and in particular their seniors, in order to participate in employer led staff development programmes. The responses suggest that there are serious problems in this regard. It should be borne in mind that 40% did not respond to the question about active help received and only 35% indicated types of unhelpful response from seniors. The former is probably more likely to be a measure of no help than a reluctance to spell out helpful behaviour and systems. The latter is more suspect, bearing in mind that questions of trust in the confidentiality assurances may be significant. This is particularly so in view of the fact that departmental locations were registered on the questionnaire.

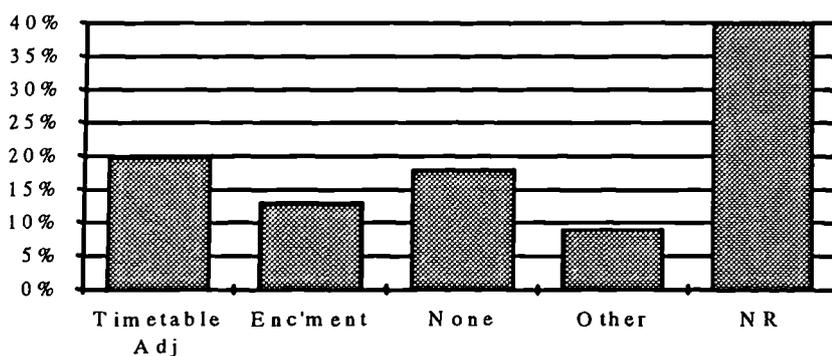
It needs however to be noted that only 33% of the total respondents claimed to receive active help in participating in central staff development activities and this was more evident in the ex-

polytechnic universities than in the rest. Most of the help was in timetable adjustments although many pointed out that this was more in theory than in practice. Several in the ex-polytechnic universities said that they had received financial help but this was not mentioned by anyone in the "older" universities. In response to questions about unhelpful behaviour by seniors the most common was indifference, with hostility featuring second. Indifference was more likely to be manifested in the "older" universities, but a larger proportion of those who registered hostile responses were employed in the ex-polytechnic sector. (See Fig 7.16a and b).

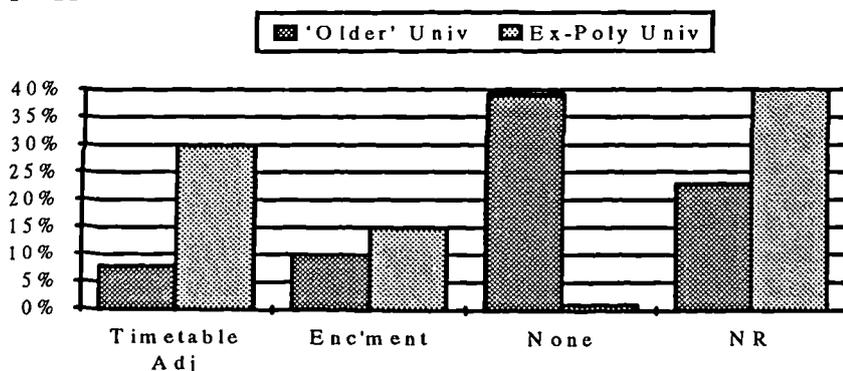
Fig 7.16a

**Active Help from Seniors**

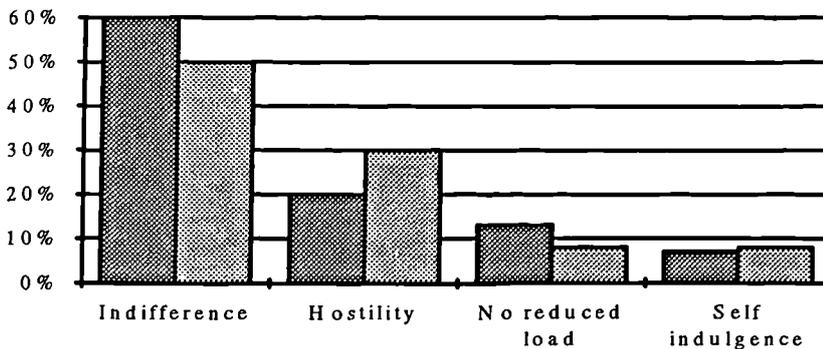
All



By type of institution



Unhelpful Response of Seniors by type of institution (39 Responses)

Definitions of Indifference

No interest  
 No acknowledgement  
 Seen as irrelevant

Definitions of Hostility

Cynicism  
 Disparagement  
 Seen as a holiday  
 Low importance given

Clearly this has major implications for corporate staff development policy and more investigation is needed about the way middle and senior management relate to staff development activities in their employing institutions. The picture presented from the questionnaires and reinforced by the interviews, is that the majority are relatively vulnerable staff in view of their recency of appointment and there is ever present concern to get through probation or secure renewed contracts. They are engaged in staff development programmes often as a condition of their employment but very few with the kind of departmental support systems which encourage participation. Of course the ever present problem of research of this nature is the possibility that those who respond are those with the greatest axe to grind. On the other hand, one can only draw on the material presented and interviews with the staff development personnel in all the universities in this study suggest that none of these insights will be a surprise or generate doubts about the validity of the findings.

It also raises the pressure on the profile of programmes on offer and emphasises the need for them to be favourably received and proved to be of value. It also raises questions of where

appraisal fits into the scheme of things. These questions are best explored later in considering the interview as well as the questionnaire responses. It is worth noting that the most valuable central staff development registered by 97 of the 109 responses was that 74% felt that teaching and learning skills training was the most valuable. This is not surprising given the fact that the overwhelming focus of staff development programmes in terms of time allocation and significance is in this area. Of the rest 7% found the networking possibilities the most valuable and 19% gave other less quantifiable reasons.

Criticisms of the programmes undertaken do not lend themselves to easy classification and will be discussed in conjunction with the interview material. The most frequently mentioned criticism was about the use of time with a general view that courses could have been more time efficient. This was more evident in the universities operating mandatory and/or award bearing systems. Many commented on sessions "being strung out" or of attendance being too inflexible. The views elicited by Brown and Atkins (1986) in their research of 62 universities and colleges in 1985 in which those with responsibility for staff training (as distinct from those involved) indicated that there was little staff interest in training programmes. This was not reflected in the responses of this research, staff were interested, but overloaded and under pressure.

What was evident is the other key findings of Brown and Atkins (1986) was of little recognition in the reward system for involvement in organised courses and there was widespread lack of support from senior staff. The view of Matheson (1981) and Harding (1978) that one of the criticisms of teaching and learning skills training were rooted in challenges to the theoretical standing of the courses, was not demonstrated. The criticisms voiced by the participants in this research was not a challenge to theoretical legitimacy but more about the distribution of time between theory and practice. In this regard, favouring a

greater allocation to practice based learning particularly those that provided opportunities for participants to be observed and receive comments. In this sense supporting the views of Moses (1985) in his assertion that "most staff want practical advice, prescriptive guidance, "do's and don'ts"."

This is not, according to the accounts in this research, because of a rejection of theory per se, in fact many commented on the value of understanding the contributing factors for effective learning. It was more based on survival strategies, how to get through the time pressures and the need to prepare for tomorrow. This was supported by the interviews which provided graphic illustrations of staff exhausted from a hard day, in the late afternoon, sitting in sessions that they considered to be too long, sometimes in overcrowded rooms, knowing they wouldn't get home until well into the evening and not prepared for tomorrow's' 9.a.m. lecture. A more detailed analysis of these and other issues will be presented later but in considering responses to the perceived value of staff development programmes, empathy with the newly appointed, inexperienced and to some extent panicking academic is essential.

Finally in this section attempts were made to discover any relationship between the appraisal system and staff development. It is possible to argue that the appraisal system is potentially the heart of staff development and from it all other development can take place. The problem lies in the degree to which it is understood to be a control mechanism as distinct from a vehicle for individual and collective development. The introduction of an appraisal requirement into higher education in the early 1990s when the critical agenda was at its height and when performance related pay was being muted, was not the most fertile climate for it being understood as developmental.

These dilemmas are well articulated by Redman and colleagues (1993), who suggest a variety of forms that appraisal can take. Two of the contributors (Dove and Brown 1993) make a number of points which are of relevance here, they identify possible problems from differences in expectations between the appraiser and appraisee, the degree to which the interests of the individual can conflict with the needs of the collective and issues around how appraisers are selected. In regard to the latter they identify the unwilling appraiser as being particularly problematic and describe situations which were echoed in this research. This type of appraiser is likely to say something like "I haven't got the time to do the full appraisal as the system demands, but if we just have a little chat as we've always done, that should be OK, shouldn't it?" (Dove and Brown 1993). They also point out that appraisers are often be appointed on the grounds of status rather than suitability for the task and a two day course on how to appraise is limited in what can be achieved.

This research suggests that the kind of problems outlined above are not unusual which raises questions about whether, in its current manifestations, it is an effective tool for control or development. Furthermore, that the varying practices described make it difficult to think of a **system** in operation. Although most staff responding to the questionnaire were part of an appraisal process there was some variation in how frequently these were understood to be conducted and considerable variation in what was addressed during the actual appraisal.

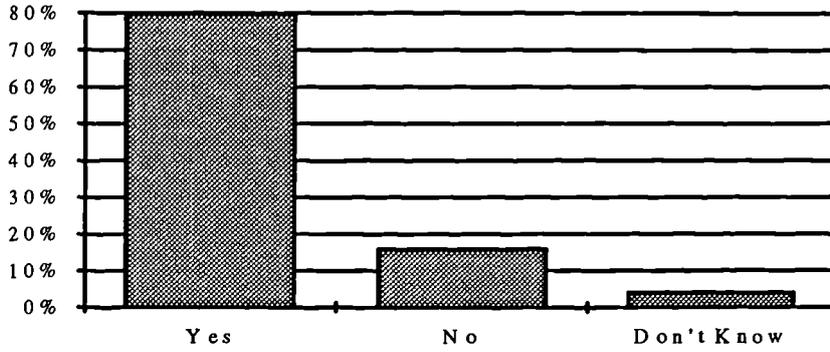
This will be discussed more fully after considering the evidence from the interviews but to note that only 51% of the respondents who had been approached, claimed that their involvement in staff development programmes had been noted during appraisal. This could be because of the timing of the appraisal and it is important to note that staff must bear responsibility for any

excluded elements. On the other hand the descriptions from the interviews of how appraisals took place suggests this is more systemic. (See Fig 7.17)

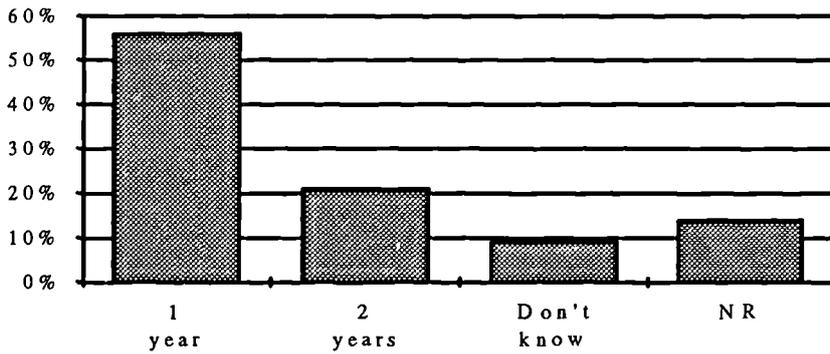
Fig 7.17

Appraisal (All)

Existence

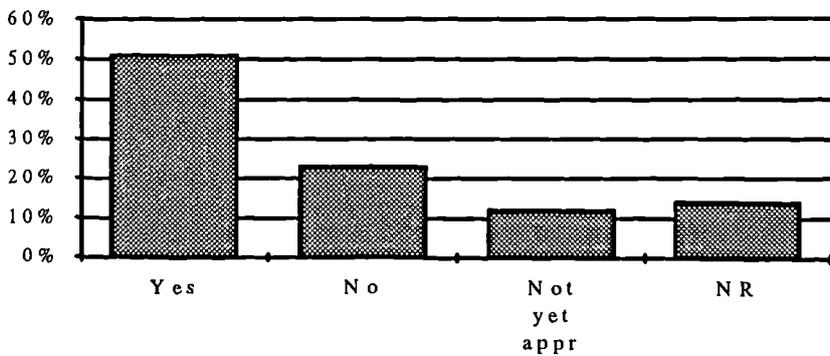


Frequency



4 said 'in theory'

Training Noted at Appraisal



The conclusions that one can draw from the questionnaire responses with appropriate caution in the degree to which they are an accurate reflection of practice is that there is still a long way to go before one can claim that there is a comprehensive and **widely accepted** staff development system<sup>i</sup> operation. One of the major tensions appears to be between what academics, particularly senior academics think of their career priorities as compared to the policy and practice of their employing institutions and the agents of change and development. These differences are manifested in a number of ways, not only through the historical division of labour between research and teaching.

The emphasis in centralised staff development programmes on teaching does little to resolve this tension. There appear to be tensions about the degree to which senior staff see themselves as managers of human resources and this surfaces in regard to appraisal systems and support or otherwise for staff development programmes. There are also tensions between collective approaches to staff development and the autonomy of the individual to pursue one's own academic career as one sees fit. These issues are reinforced by the interview responses to which we now turn.

## CHAPTER 8

### LEARNING FROM PRACTICE. 4 Voices of experience.

Individual interviews were conducted with 47 academics, all but one at their place of work, most in their rooms and lasting between one and a half and two and a half hours. The interviews were unstructured in the sense that they were designed to encourage a free flow of opinion by the interviewee, but structured to the degree that the interviewer worked from an outline plan for everyone but supplemented it with a list of detailed questions arising from the questionnaire submission. (see Appendix 6 for the general outline plan). All the interviews commenced with a reaffirmation of the purpose of the research and assurances of confidentiality. Methods of recording were discussed and agreed, a few were taped but this was found to be a less effective means of recording over a long period. The main method used was note-taking which was checked over with the interviewee at periodic intervals. All then proceeded to "flesh out" the career path of the interviewee to this point before exploration of current staff development and experience of employer lead programmes.

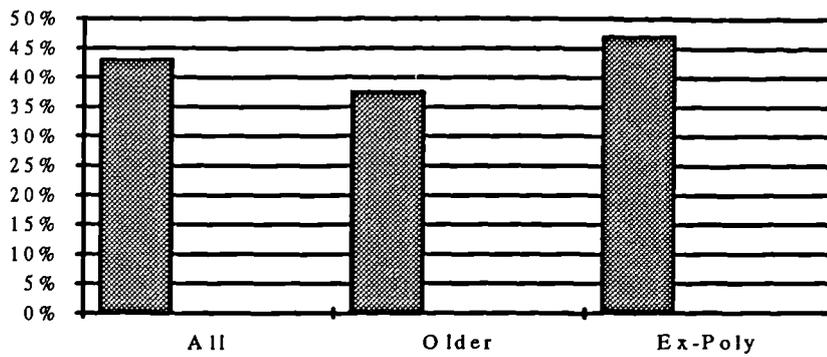
It is important to note how the interviewees compare with the totality of those who submitted completed questionnaires. It also serves to emphasise the fact that no claim for institutional representation can be made given the limited numbers involved. It will be seen in Fig. 8.1 and 8.2 that 43% of those who submitted completed questionnaires were interviewed, representing 28% of the 265 originally invited to participate in the research. The ex-polytechnic personnel totalled 47% of those submitted from this sector, compared to 37% of those submitted from the rest. Although the gender differentiation was remarkably uniform, the older members of staff as a proportion of those submitted, were more prepared to be interviewed. It will be noted in

8.2 that there was variation between institutions in the numbers of those interviewed - from 70% to 30% of the submissions from any particular university.

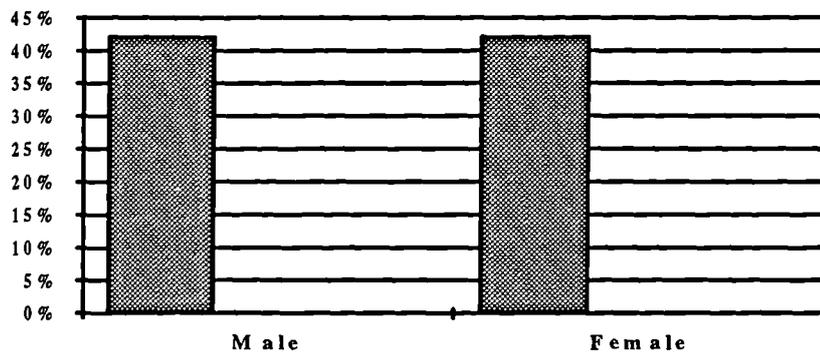
Fig 8.1

**Profile of Interviewees (Actual Interviewees)**

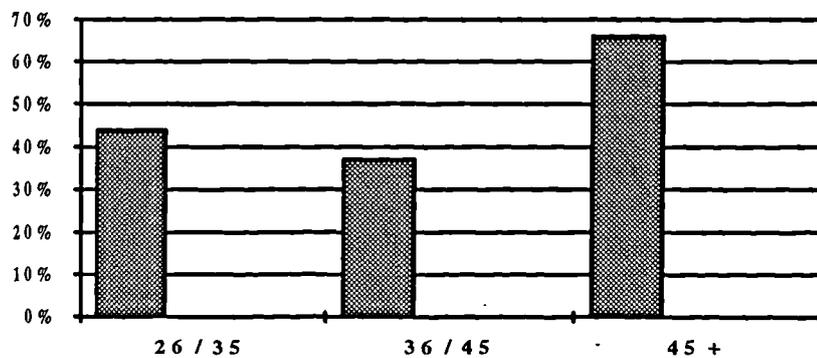
a) Interviews as % of responses



b) Gender distribution as % of responses



c) Age distribution as % of relevant responses



Note re:

b) These are a % of the relevant gender distribution among respondents

c) These are a % of the relevant age distribution among respondents

Fig 8.2

## Comparisons with Questionnaire by Institution

|    | Q. Responses | Willing to Interview | Actual Interview |
|----|--------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. | 25           | 12 (48%)             | 10 (40%)         |
| 2. | 23           | 8 (35%)              | 8 (35%)          |
| 3. | 20           | 7 (35%)              | 6 (30%)          |
| 4. | 18           | 8 (44%)              | 7 (38%)          |
| 5. | 23           | 17 (74%)             | 6 (70%)          |
|    |              | 52                   | 47               |

of the 47 willing to be interviewed      18 - "older" Univ. from 48 responses = 37%

32 - Ex Poly from 61 responses = 52%

Actual interviews

18 - "older" Univ. = 37% of responses and  
16% of 115 distributed.

29 - Ex-poly = 47% of responses and  
19% of 150 distributed.

All actual interviews as % of total distributed = 28%. As a % of responses = 43%.

The variation in the number of those prepared to be interviewed in each university is a major methodological problem and further emphasises the problem of representation. One of the questions that had to be addressed is whether one should only interview the same number from each institution which would have resulted in 30 interviews instead of 47. On the other hand this would not have resolved the problem of representation only that of possible institutional bias. As it turned out bias was less of an issue at the level of individual university but could have served to emphasise the distinctions between the "older" and the ex-polytechnic universities.

Even with such a limited number of participants there are problems of information retrieval in a form that does not cloud general and important issues with a mass of interesting but nevertheless extraneous detail. Each interview could have been the basis of a mini biography and part of the difficulty of doing the research was the importance of controlling ones fascination with the interesting people one encountered along the way. Turner (1988) sees the amount of detail as a particular problem of qualitative research methods, in fact he rather romantically sees this as a need to "become a connoisseur in the realm of social knowing" which requires an ability to sort through the "chaos and ambiguity of masses of non standardised data".

He further argues that good qualitative research in organisations should not produce telephone directory accounts but there is a need to find strategies for extracting propositions about the organisation in question which are sustainable and communicable. (Turner 1988). In an effort to hover in this direction, the method chosen to convey the insights gleaned from the interviews is to try wherever possible to do so through quotations within four broad areas:-

The career demands experienced by staff.

Experience of appraisal systems.

The departmental climate in regard to central staff development.

Experience and opinions of staff development programmes.

The following information will include a number of quotations, these will be numbered 1 to 5 to record the employing university **except** for those about views on centralised staff development programmes and a limited number of individual examples of the need for staff support and development. The reason for this being that institutional designation could lead to

the identification of individuals in ways which would not be compatible with the ethical issues referred to in Chapter 5. It does not invalidate the views expressed in terms of the general insights that can be gleaned. Where it is relevant quotations will be referenced in terms of whether they stem from "older" as distinct from ex - polytechnic universities.

### **Career Demands.**

The major impressions from the interviews is of staff who invest a great deal of themselves in their work and often but not always, for idealistic reasons. The vast majority of those interviewed gained personal satisfaction from their work and in the ex-polytechnic universities it was very common to hear comparisons with previous occupations in which the relative professional autonomy of the university was highly prized. Several of those who had experience in running their own professional practice or commercial enterprise commented on how relaxed they felt now that the responsibility for keeping the enterprise afloat was not their main responsibility. One very senior member of staff in one of the "older" universities commented favourably on the trust and independence he enjoyed in comparison to his previous job in the civil service.

Many expressed deep feelings of commitment -

" I love teaching, its all I've ever wanted to do" (1), "Really enjoy the job, have never worked so hard but I love it, particularly like the freedom to initiate."(3) "I've got a bright future I hope, developing my teaching, outside contacts, building up my research empire and there's a lot of comfort in being a big fish in a small pond etc."(3) "I feel a commitment to the area and the university, I like the commitment to the kind of

students we attract, professionally I'm on the move." (4) " I could become discouraged if I didn't have a passion for what I'm doing. Plan to apply for Head of Department post in 4 years time when the current one retires." (5)

On the other hand, there is a lot of pressure and this stems from two main sources, the need and desire to teach well and the increasing emphasis on research. As far as the pressure to teach well is concerned, this was as could be expected, most graphically described by the newly appointed in all five of the universities. There was however, more evidence of departmental support in the "older" universities in the form of reduced teaching loads in the first year though the support was not necessarily extended to involvement in central staff development programmes.

The overall impression in the ex-polytechnics is of being thrown in at the deep end but with more support from departmental seniors for involvement in central staff development programmes. The increasing pressure on research was, again as could be expected, experienced differently in the "older" as distinct from the ex - polytechnic universities but is growing across the board.

As far as teaching is concerned the high levels of stress in preparing for one's first teaching was indicated in the following -

"I started two weeks before the students and was told ten days before what I was to teach. I had 140 students per class and it was chaos - just hated it. I complained to my senior who advised me to seek help from EDS (the Educational Development Service). The department gave me no help, I was and still am very stressed, had a lot of illnesses

and at the moment have a mouth full of ulcers" (3) "The new term was like going into the lion's den - the training course was useless - I had to take three hours out to attend when, my God, I've got a lecture at 1 o'clock and I'm not prepared - can't manufacture time".(4) "I was very frightened at first but the department gave me a very reduced load and encouraged me to attend the trouble-shooting seminars. These were very useful not only in the tips they gave but helping me to realise I wasn't alone". (1)

Most of those interviewed were experiencing pressure to do research but this is manifested differently in the "older" universities to that of the ex-polytechnic universities. The key difference appears to be that staff in the "older" universities work in a climate where the research role is established and the current pressure is to maintain and/or improve the individual and departmental research profile. In the ex-polytechnic universities the task appears somewhat different in that staff are confronting new demands to move into research but still expected to retain a high teaching and administrative base. All of the latter staff mentioned special departmental appointments of seniors whose specific remit is to encourage research.

Those most recently appointed in the ex-polytechnic universities recalled some reference to research at appointment but understood their main role to be that of teachers. All the staff interviewed from the "older" universities were appointed to undertake research as well as teach and this featured large in the appointing process. Expectations generated in the appointing process is under-researched but there do appear to be marked differences between the two sectors and this must have implications for staff development, particularly in the establishment of a comprehensive and continuous career long system. The research role in the "older" universities was said to have been stressed at interview and appeared to the staff concerned to have been the main reason for their appointment. In the one "older" university in

this study operating a mandatory system of teacher training, the requirement to attend the course was not always mentioned at interview but emerged later through a variety of means.(see Fig.6.2 above). This was graphically illustrated by one of the interviewees -

“Thought I was going on a 4 day course on how to lecture - found I had to attend 18 sessions 3 to 6 p.m. plus written assignments - found I had to attend.”(2).

It needs to be borne in mind that these schemes are very new and one could expect that all the procedures are not fully integrated into the system. The expectations generated at interview are however significant in the way staff define their role and how they could be expected to respond to particular types of staff development. The staff working in ex-polytechnic universities by comparison to those in the rest of this study, thought their major reason for appointment was their teaching role and they were much more likely to have been informed at interview about the existence of mandatory teacher training programmes. In this respect the degree of cognitive dissonance between appointing process, perceived function and centralised staff development could be expected to be less in the ex-polytechnics universities.

However, most of those interviewed across the board mentioned the research selectivity exercises and whether their departments had done well or not. In this sense one can see the selectivity exercises reinforcing, rather than challenging traditional academic orientations. The question arises about who benefits from this process and without doubt the universities whatever their historical function benefit because so much of their income and status will accrue from positive assessments. On the current basis of career success, academics benefit because it fuels what is traditionally defined as the academic career, though to what extent traditional university cultures are challenged by “academic drift” is open to question. Although

the pressure to undertake research was experienced by most of those interviewed, in regard to day to day work ,it was experienced differently. This seems to have centred on the degree to which it was seen as essential and the degree to which it was seen as desirable. Unsurprisingly, the expectation was particularly acute in the "older" universities -

"There's enormous pressure to perform, nothing else counts."(1) "There's pressure to do things that look good and there's constant talk of publications".(2) "The only career for me is through research, the next three years will determine whether I stay in higher education or look for a specialist agency. Have found myself working for seniors who don't do research and I don't like it."(2) "My research is not suffering at the moment but I'm not getting on as well as expected because of the funding problems. There's a lot of pressure to publish."(1) " Its departmental policy to keep teaching to 20% or less in order to focus on research. It's not in my interests to be a good teacher but a good researcher. The major issue at the moment is to produce quality research proposals."  
(2)

In the ex-polytechnic universities although the pressure to do research is increasing it is still experienced by many of those interviewed as a desirable development rather than an essential one. Because of this there was more variation in response and these fell into three categories:-

- \* those who said senior staff were interested in research performance but that individual staff members could choose to concur or not.
- \* those who wanted to do research but didn't know how to proceed or received little stimulation to do so.

- \* those who disagreed or were suspicious of the pressure to do research and were resistant to the idea.

In the first category the following responses were indicative -

I'm technically under pressure to do research but there's no time. In any case I would need to do some training in research first. Could use some of my staff development money if I wanted." (3) "My CV lacks research, have no experience in doing research or applying for grants." (5) "Its now more talked about, some schools have a research culture but there's few resources and the pressure is self generated." (5) "The pressure to do research comes from me. There's no stimulus in the department." (4) "In this department research is by choice, you can choose to do more administration instead." (3). "Don't see the need to do research, I think I will compete well in the promotion stakes on what I'm already doing." (3)

The majority however fell in the second category -

"I would love to do research but there's no guidance or funding." (3) "There's poor information of how to get started on research. I found out through an informal network that some departments were doing training in research methods. There's a lot of pressure to do research - your often working to other peoples agendas in this job. Most of the research going on is for higher degrees." (4) "There was emphasis on research when appointed but I've applied three times to the grant awarding committee but turned down each time. Probably don't word requests in the right way. Have no idea

how to proceed. .there's an expectation that you know how to do it." (4) " Research ? - I'm green about it, don't know how to get the money, approach companies etc."(5)

"My Ph.D research experience is not used by the department, could be used to teach quantitative methods but I'm not in the inner circle of who decides these things. Research is my interest, teaching is how I earn my living."(5) "I've had no training in research, asked for it some time ago but got a cool response. To ask for help in this department is seen as a weakness not a source of professional integrity. Practical training in writing research proposals and something on the ethics of research would be really helpful".(5) "There's a lot of pressure to do research, 17 working days are now allocated to engage in research and scholarly activity. Some members of the department are defined as key research personnel, I'm not one of them". (3) " 19 working days are given to research, it is seen as vital to raise the profile of the department. There's a lot of pressure to publish, it causes a lot of worry. Research methods training would be really helpful." (3). " The pro - vice chancellor has visited the project and encouraged research but its difficult to know how to get started." (5)

Those who were resistant to the idea of developing research were in the minority and tended to be staff who had the longest service. The change from being a polytechnic to that of a university was not universally welcomed, in fact one interviewee was particularly aggrieved by what he saw as the diminution in terms and conditions of employment -

"The job has declined over the years - more expected and less remuneration. Can't attract able students, have to work harder with them. We've lost a lot of our holidays, have to plan when to take them now and some-one has to be here all year." (4)

In the main, any resistance to the priorities given to research from both sectors, stemmed from a commitment and a liking for the teaching role. The following comments are indicative of these views -

"There's a lot of pressure to do research, the signals are that it is all important. I'm against it - some are good at it - others get on the bandwagon to escape teaching."(3)

"My research record is not good - high quality teaching should also be recognised. The Vice - Chancellor prioritises teaching but the department has a high commitment to research and did well in the recent assessment exercises".(5). " There's a sense of retreat by staff from the pressures and I think that research can be a retreat." (5). "I'm committed here but feel undervalued because of my preference for teaching" (1) "I'm at a loss when the students are not here and you can't do research on a part-time basis."

(4)

These issues have implications for the low priority placed on centralised staff development focused on the research role evident in all the universities in this study. (see Figs. 7.14 and 7.15 above). The key difference appears to be that staff in the "older" universities were much more likely to feel that their post-graduate qualifications had been an effective training in research whereas the low priority in the ex-polytechnic universities seemed connected to a lack of clarity about research and the role that training could offer.

A minority of those interviewed had recently assumed more managerial roles and registered either their lack of agreement with the process or their general lack of preparation for the tasks. In the main the concern was more about preparation rather than resistance -

"I've had no training for my current managerial demands - learning as I go - feel so much pressure, my partner must be going mad." (1) "Teaching is not now the important part of my job, I've only been here two years and I'm now programme leader and have been given a lot of responsibility. Hope I can do it." (5) " Have been encouraged to seek promotion - going through the bar confers senior lectureship, you only get a PL (principal lectureship) on the basis of dead men's shoes. Why should I bust a gut?"(5). "I wish we'd stayed a polytechnic - all PLs now expected to be managers. I don't want to manage anyone and they've given me this research fellow to look after. I've told him he will have to work it out on his own."(3).

All of the above indicates that academic staff across the board are under pressure and subject to considerable ambivalence about their current and future roles. The significance for staff developers is that most of their efforts are currently focused on the newly recruited and primarily geared to the teaching role. Yet, there are major inter and extra-institutional forces at work which are not necessarily compatible with these efforts.

The inter-institutional forces is mainly taking the form of a more hierarchical managerialism but this is still not sufficiently institutionalised for it to be effective. The extra-institutional forces geared to accountability and methods of funding criteria are fuelling the research role, causing academic drift in the ex-polytechnic sector whilst trying to achieve economies of scale in the teaching function. All of which, if it is to be realised entails not only a significant shift in the managerial climate but also in the levels of managerial skill. The following sections on appraisal and departmental support for training, suggests that managerial skill for major change agendas is limited.

## Experience of Appraisal Systems.

Logically one would expect that the connection between work pressure and staff development would be via appraisal. The evidence from the questionnaires, reinforced by the interviews is that it is not working as such in the universities under review. Indeed it difficult from the accounts of individual staff across the board to understand the function of appraisal other than a knee jerk reaction in response to government pressure. Of course, this is a limited survey and may not be indicative of widespread institutional practice but the responses bore such remarkable similarity that it is hard to marginalise the findings to that of a number of idiosyncratic statements. The overall impression is one where, with notable exceptions, individual academics particularly the newly recruited, see appraisal as an interesting challenge, they often prepare for it in considerable detail and find in practice it is very disappointing. The disappointment seems to be due to a number of interconnected factors:-

1. A resistance of senior staff to the managerial role implied by appraisal systems.
2. Embarrassment or lack of expertise on the part of senior staff.
3. A departmental culture of cynicism about the process.
4. A systemic problem of policy shortcomings in the role and use of appraisal in personnel management.

First however one should acknowledge that a minority of staff found it to be useful and the following comments are indicative of their views -

"I've found that appraisal only works if there is a high degree of trust evident. I've got a good relationship with senior management so it worked for me."<sup>(5)</sup> " The school has

defined targets and the need for training is defined by appraisal. The Head of Department sees all appraisal documents which are reviewed by the senior management team. It was challenging but useful." (4) "My appraisal was fine. It explored my practice and helped me with my future planning." (3) " Volunteers do it, as far as I know there is no system of training. In the past could select ones own appraiser but now allocated by Head of Department. I find them useful particularly the sharing with a colleague, though there's no real expectations that anything will come of them." (1).

The negative comments far outweighed the positive and even if one takes into account the in-built tendency of academia to be critical, the following comments lead one to the conclusion that there are considerable practice shortcomings -

" It was not particularly useful, I discovered it wasn't wise to be honest and self critical because he would then proceed to make a mountain out of a molehill."(2) "I've got a background in appraisal - the process here is one of sparring between colleagues. There's a problem of trust in the process - appraiser could be a competitor for promotion."(5) "We did a full day on appraisal, there was a three line whip. The theory is that it should be peer appraisal, focus on development not management. A fiasco - conducted in the pub, on the phone - sparse documentation compounded by cynicism" (5)

"My senior was very laid back - not pushing to implement the system. I'm not really sure how I'm doing and would welcome some feedback and the Dean never says well done to anyone."(2) " More like a chat - lacked clout, no check on my work - done by colleague less experienced than me - a bit ritualistic, he can't help with resources."

(1)(3)(5) "There's potential for it but it's seen as a management tool to beat staff with - so why should we bother".(5) "It doesn't compare in rigour to the civil service where it is tied into promotion."(2).

If one takes these as a partial reflection on what is happening in appraisal processes coupled with the 12% of the total respondents who have not yet been appraised (see Fig 7.17 ) it does not appear to be a reliable tool for assessing the development needs of staff. Only one of those interviewed knew what had or would happen to appraisal documents and the exception was because all departmental staff knew they would be discussed by the departmental strategy team. In this sense the worker saw them as a management tool for departmental use. The other interviewees were far less clear about the purpose. The older, longer employed members tended to be cynical about the whole process seeing them either as useless because there were no resources to implement any change agendas or because of distrust of their employing institutions.

This was not the case among the newly-recruited who wanted to see them used for reflection and future planning. Many had taken a long time in preparing statements for the appraisal interview only to be greeted by someone who either hadn't read them, focused on the negatives or seemed embarrassed by the whole process. Very few had experienced it as the growth opportunity they expected. Significantly for this document, there appeared to be no difference whether training for appraisers was strongly or weakly implemented at an institutional level. It seems more to do with the general understandings about appraisal and the degree to which it is institutionalised as part of professional development and it may be indicative of the nature of professional, peer consultation. Where trust in the process and ones use of it by colleagues is low, one would expect it to be a less effective vehicle for growth and forward planning.

## **Departmental Climate in Regard to Training/Staff Development.**

An important part of the success of any centrally driven staff development policy must rest on the guidance, support and reinforcement which staff experience from their departmental seniors and colleagues. In fact the most recent thinking on how one can generate a comprehensive and continuing approach to the developing needs of staff is to see this in terms of partnership with departments.(UCoSDA 1994). The participants in this research were asked on the questionnaire about active help from their departments when they were engaged in centralised staff development activities, 33% of the respondents described various forms of assistance, 18% said they had received none and 40% made no comment. There were a number of unclassifiable comments from 9% of the respondents. (see Fig. 7.16 above)

The 47 interviews provided an opportunity to explore how departments reacted to involvement in staff development programmes, although it needs to be borne in mind that with such a limited "sample" one cannot automatically assume that this is evidence of widespread practice. On the other hand, the comments across the five universities bore remarkable similarity which suggests that in the words of Blake (1803) a form of wisdom is the ability to see the world in a grain of sand. The overall picture is that most of the staff received very little support, in fact they experienced considerable pressure which could serve to demotivate all but the most committed. Of those who were supported the following comments are indicative -

"the staff of the department are extremely helpful, we have a mentor system and it works, my senior is excellent.(1) "There is total support, the department has a good reputation - a human ethos but is suffering from imposed changes."(1) " I had nothing

but positive encouragement to participate".(4) "I was encouraged by the principal lecturer to attend the certificate course. There's a policy also in place that all academic staff have a second language - there are no fees and I'm doing Spanish."(4)

Others experienced ambivalence in departmental response -

"This university has a commitment to develop teaching, there is a mission. But on return to the staff room some people are very cynical, just sitting out their years. I suggested to the Head of Department that other staff ought to go on the course but he said "I wouldn't go on it myself". Older staff probably need something different."(4) "In theory the department supports training and to some extent its in practice. Our senior couldn't care less - in post for four years so missed the trawl. Some colleagues see the need but are critical of the length and process. The culture is very ambivalent - it leaves staff at risk. Development is usually self generated." (5) " The department is not oriented to training - most colleagues are female and glad to have a job which fits into child care (sic). Have tried to give feedback about the course but no-one is interested. The Head of Department is very helpful in providing money and time off but there's no stimulus from the department to develop." (5).

"The academic profile of the department is very low - there's a lot of pressure for staff to do higher degrees. There's a lot of goodwill for training but no policy for reduced time - tables. The department papers over the cracks, a lot of divisions, not aired, a lot of crisis management." (3) "There's poor support for training, department has a good name for being good with students, so why training?" (4) There's conflicting messages from managers - arguing for larger classes and for simplified assessments and also for

group work to facilitate self learning but there's no training culture here. The staff are very resistant to the idea of acknowledging weaknesses.”(5)

The lack of support and encouragement was most marked and the following selection is indicative of most of the opinion -

"There's no support for training, those most in need do little. Appraisal is not effective to tackle this - the staff are very resistant to anything that smacks of managerialism."(1)

"There's a lot of pressure to do research, the department is very competitive. Senior colleagues are very critical of the participative methods on the training courses organised by.....(the staff development officer). They want to be told. There's no support to attend, in fact a lot of opposition - some of the charismatics feel they've nothing to learn. They stand up and spout for two hours and the irritating thing is the students like them."(1)

"The department grudgingly accepts the need to attend but jumps on any poor reports from those who do. There's no pressure to improve teaching from my seniors." (3) "In general things are very lax here - the Head of Department will only just have found out I'm attending. I had no help with the induction just had to find out what was expected for myself. Everyone is just left to get on with things and its assumed you learn through osmosis".(2) " It is very clear that the department makes its own rules ..the Head told me it was obligatory to attend and then never asked me anything about it."(2)

"The management culture in the department is abysmal - no co-operation between colleagues, no strategic plan. There's no mechanism for dealing with colleagues who

don't pull their weight. The students get a raw deal but the staff are totally disinterested in training."(2) " Professional development a non-event in the department - Head not the type to foster it. There's no response to anything we do, I go on conferences funded by the department and no-one wants to know. Tend to work in a vacuum - there's no training culture."(4) "They are anti-training here, on the other hand people are very busy, here at 7a.m. - there's a lot of pressure."(1) "I'm surprised by the department, expected a profundity that isn't there - the curriculum emerges ad hoc, there's poor evaluation - it stems from staff interests rather than analysis of what's needed. My training has not been utilised by my colleagues. It raises peoples expectations - we are full of idealism but when we come back to colleagues it a real grind and struggle to put it into practice." (5)

Depending on one's point of view about the increasing role of employer-led staff development and if these comments are a guide to current practice in departments, staff developers have more of an uphill task than any of the reports advocating better staff development practices indicate. It is not sufficient to refer to traditional cultures which work against staff development programmes. There is a need to define and acknowledge the formal and informal ways that departments can render programmes less effective. It is evident from these accounts that one doesn't need to be oppositional to colleagues attending courses and the like, indifference is enough to downplay the significance for newly appointed and often anxious staff.

It is also not clear from these accounts whether the negative reactions of departmental seniors and colleagues is a thought out opposition or whether it is simply not valuing services that are not yet fully institutionalised. No-one is immune from the pressures in higher education and

one could well empathise with senior staff who may not accept the managerial role thrust on them and not see the training of staff as a priority in practices where there is already a worked out custom and practice.

On the other hand it is possible to see the negative reactions whether conscious or not as a manifestation of the donnish dominion no matter how persuasively Halsey (1992) argues that it no longer holds sway. This then would make sense of the low priority given to centralised staff development evident internationally as well as nationally, highlighted in the work of Teather (1979). The fact that external forces are imposing change on the lives of academics at all levels does not mean that in the mid 1990s the professional autonomy that academics have enjoyed will be thrown out of the window. Part of the socialisation process that Becher (1989) describes is about maintaining the fictions as well as the realities of what being an academic is about. The fact that people are appointed to foster staff development, are located in central management in some shape and form, whose academic credibility does not rest on a universally recognised subject, does not seriously challenge the power and influence of the professorate and other departmental seniors. Nor is it necessary to be oppositional in a direct way, there are always subtle or not so subtle methods of holding on to influence over ones junior staff.

The introduction of staff development policies, often undertaken without much careful thought, sometimes as a knee jerk reaction to external forces by central management, challenges what Brown (1992) has described as the negotiated order. This is a process first defined by Strauss and colleagues (1963) in which employees "with different commitments, reflecting differences in their occupational training and socialisation, their positions in the organised hierarchy and the stage reached in their careers" (Brown 1992) work out the complex division of labour in the organisations in which they work. It is a negotiation process

that is implicit and explicit but at its heart it is a more or less shared understanding of how things will be and it works because the concept of negotiation is accepted by the parties concerned.

In this sense, ways of working which are imposed, as these staff development policies appear to have been, without much evident sign of negotiation with heads of departments, will inevitably leave the newly recruited as "piggy in the middle". Also, if the negotiated order is challenged in ways that are not seen as professionally relevant one cannot see negative reactions of senior staff purely in terms of bloody mindedness or irrationality. The fact that so many of the programmes are either geared to or only attended by the newly recruited member of staff or the highly motivated, raises questions about the experience base of senior staff in the judgements they make about the value of centralised staff development. If the main vehicle of communication is second hand from the evaluations of participating staff members, the opportunities for distortion increase.

Examples of this can be gleaned from the views of those who participated in this research about the courses and programmes they experienced. The comments in this section will not be numbered because it could lead to the identification of particular courses, the ethical considerations of which were discussed in Chapter 5.

### **Experience and Opinions of Staff Development Programmes.**

It needs to be borne in mind that academics by definition are trained to be critical and many of them were of the courses they attended. This was particularly so of the mandatory certificated courses. The programmes that involved voluntary attendance which were short-term and

tended to deal with practical concerns which staff themselves defined were the most highly regarded. Although one can see this purely as range of andragogical issues around the efficacy of learning through self definition, ownership and participation, it also has significant cultural and in the words of Becher (1989) tribal manifestations. If an important component of the tribalism of academia is centred on professional autonomy, the mandatory systems are a direct challenge and the voluntary less so.

It is difficult to know, therefore, if the negativity was generated by compulsion, the time inputs, the content, method or a combination of all four. Some of the criticisms did however sound more focused on the quality of the curriculum and its methods. It needs to also be borne in mind that the mandatory courses were all focused on teaching and learning and the reaction of "physician heal thyself" is more likely to emerge in relation to courses of this type. It needs to be borne in mind also that all the mandatory courses attracted positive and negative responses.

Examples of the positive reactions are indicated thus -

"It was good, it involved the vice-chancellor and I've used the course for all kinds of things. Did a lot of networking, got on committees normally reserved for senior staff as a result of the contacts made on the course because it helped me to understand the total institution." "The course itself was fine but the students support traditional methods and its hard to put it into practice." "It was a good course and I've been able to apply it. Could get interested in doing an M.A. in Education but is that the best thing to do for career progression?" "I find the central training staff to be very helpful in tailoring courses to meet our departmental needs and staff can opt for central courses if they want to." "I thought it was brilliant, it cut down isolation and I liked the expectations

that staff would improve. I had a very supportive tutor. I now reflect more and don't take anything for granted."

Other comments still in a positive vein but with more ambivalence. -

" The most useful part was the students learning for themselves and with each other. This was new thinking for me and gave me confidence to have a go. More practical work on presentation skills were needed however, it was worth doing but the timing, (late afternoon to early evening) gives out the wrong messages about the importance of this kind of training and it was difficult to do because of this." " It was good but there was a problem about relating the course to university policy - we were encouraged to be innovative with interactive handouts - yet the department has a policy of only allowing 80 pages for a 15 week course per student." "The certificate course was good because it cut down isolation, reduced anxiety and the observed teaching was very useful. The methods were poor however, poor use of staff, poor use of the projector and a reliance on the lecture style - not a model to use."

"The certificate course was excellent, compulsion was not a problem though some colleagues resented it. I was informed I had to attend by memo which was a bit off - putting. The induction course was not well done, the speakers weren't briefed - not remotely a good model of practice." "It was basically very good but the time could have been used better. It was repetitive and not always relevant and too participative at times which made it hard to take notes."

Those that registered negative views did so partly from what one can call a mixture of personal and professional issues and others more exclusively focused on professional issues. The former was centred on their difficulties in attending and their apparent powerlessness during the course. In fact one of the interesting aspects of these views was how dis - empowered workers felt and in some cases how they reacted against it. Examples of the powerlessness is indicated thus -

"It nearly killed me attending the lectures, my wife was pregnant, I had to rearrange 20 hours of teaching in order to go. Found a lot of talk and chalk, a lot of time serving, large numbers, a funny group deliberately mixed up on the basis that teaching is generic. No-one asked me what my training needs are" " Being treated like children led to an underlying feeling of resentment." "Morale is low, there's a lot of pressure and am often given work to do without notice. There's a lot of fear of the wrist being slapped."

One respondent commented in more detail about the powerlessness and seemed to offer some insight into dilemmas about the role of staff development personnel in relation to academic staff -

"There was confusion whether we were colleagues or students. They didn't control us very well and I regret to say we took the piss out of them. We were just like naughty children and they tried to control me by referring to me as "doctor" which made things worse."

When questioned further about why they should feel so powerless and seemed unable to find ways to intervene in productive ways, all of the above found it difficult to explain the process.

When asked if they had used the anonymous evaluations during and after the courses and programmes to register their views the response was mixed. Some had but quite a few had not, which raises questions about how and in what kind of climate the evaluations were conducted. None, at the time of the interview could relate it to how "their" student responses might be understood from ones own experience. This was only one of the many ways related during the interviews where there was an apparent lack of capitalising on experiential learning opportunities. In fact, the impression gleaned was that there was little connection made during the programmes to what was happening "in here" that could be used to reflect on practice "out there".

The negative responses of what can be seen as of exclusively professional concern, centred more on specific methods they encountered during the courses.

"The course seemed set up for the arts and humanities - not so relevant for those of us in professional practice." "Wasn't impressed - the pressure on time was very great. I had a negative attitude to the course at the beginning and have not changed my view. It was too long, the staff seemed to be stringing it out. The room was too small for the number of students, couldn't read the overheads - some lecturers obviously hadn't done the course. They deliberately mixed up faculties, not helpful, we need to meet and work with people who share similar teaching situations."

"It was devoid of content though there were some nice exercises - a lot could have been done in less time. Some weeks it was a complete waste of time but other students could have a lot to do with it. I tried to get us together to do something about it but they were not prepared to meet." " It was far too long - we needed the practicalities

early. I learnt a lot from other students but some old hands would have been useful to help us with the petty bureaucracy in the University."

"The course was poorly received because individual needs were not taken into account - the students tried to hijack the course. The residential was awful and no-one seemed to understand how difficult it was to attend. There was also a lot of frustration from students because they were at a more advanced stage than the course." "It needed a faster pace and to be more concise." "Some parts were really useful particularly doing some teaching and receiving direct feedback. It was hard to justify three hours each week, there was repetition and parts of it could have been done with handouts. There was a lot of discontent from students and the people teaching it seemed bored - as a model of good educational practice it left a lot to be desired."

" It seemed to rest on being made to do things - I didn't like the passivity. I'm still interested in training but not another qualification." "On the certificate course, the high tutor/student ratio caused a lot of resentment when we are so pushed for staff. Many of the students had a lot of teaching experience but no attempt was made to find out what we could offer. Because of their high level of staffing their attempts to replicate good teaching practice lacked credibility. The most useful part was someone sitting in on my teaching and giving me immediate feedback."

A question was posed on the questionnaire and during interview about the kind of recommendations which they might want to make about central staff development. Few responded on the questionnaires and the comments that were made were sparse and gave little clue to content. Those that were made were overwhelmingly about method and most about the

use of time. During the interviews this question was explored again but yielded little which would inform content other than that several of the ex-polytechnic university staff would appreciate centralised opportunities to explore their research role. Several of those interviewed said they felt their seniors and other colleagues needed training opportunities but were generally of the opinion that those most in need were less likely to be involved.

The sparsity of the recommendations even from those with the most negative views is hard to explain other than through their lack of experience in any alternative system. It is hard to convey on paper the feelings of pressure that many of those interviewed were experiencing in their day to day lives. Yet with only two exceptions all commented at the end of the interview of the value of being able to sit back for a period of time and review their career and current work experiences with someone from the "outside". In the case of the two who evidently found it a chore was a man who carried a lot of anger about academics in general, not least those who spent time asking what he saw as irrelevant questions. The other a woman who indicated throughout, that the interview and to judge from her answers the efforts of staff developers, was getting in the way of her test tubes. Given the significance of her research, particularly for women, this interviewer could hardly quarrel with her priorities.

The positive responses to the interview process may however indicate a lack of professional support systems within the departmental structure. It needs to be borne in mind that in addition to doing their normal academic load many of the ex-polytechnic university staff had undertaken major course adjustments to modularise and to move from terms to semesters during the previous year. Most of those interviewed from all five of the universities felt overworked and that their domestic and personal life was suffering. The overwhelming impression gained from the interviews was of tired, isolated and poorly managed staff. There were exceptions but the

differences appeared to be centred on the degree and quality of departmental support not necessarily on the work pressure being experienced.

Some of the shortcomings in departmental support were not only serious in personal terms of staff being close to the edge of illness but were serious in human resource management terms as well. There were numerous instances of staff who had skills and interests which were not capitalised, for example:-

- \* the member of staff in the arts who wanted to do research, was frequently invited to overseas conferences to demonstrate, kept meticulous notes of experiments yet did not know if this would count as research. When asked about the availability and quality of departmental consultations it seemed that there was little help available and that the guidance that was available focused on teaching functions.
- \* The member of staff who was not interested in research but as a mathematician of some experience and interest in helping adults without numeracy skills to learn, who found no outlet for her talents and interests. This was because departmental policy placed priority on well qualified students (even though there was difficulty in recruitment) and a high priority on research profiles. Yet in the Northern Region there are major concerns about retraining adults in new technologies to which this worker and presumably the department could contribute.
- \* the linguist with skills and interests in working with disadvantaged young people and who had been seconded to community projects in the area. The secondment could be seen as an indication of the universities' and the departments' ability to utilise staff

imaginatively. However, in describing the experience and why it had now ceased, there were clear indications that the worker had not received the appropriate support and guidance during the experience. The workers distress at the degree of deprivation encountered during the work was compounded by the "get on with it on your own" attitude of seniors. Yet this could have been and in many senses was, ground breaking work which could have brought great credit to the department and the institution.

There were numerous other examples of less all-embracing significance, of staff not publishing when with appropriate encouragement they could have done so, of skills and experience lying dormant etc. It needs also to be stressed that there were a number of examples of what sounded like sensitive support and guidance systems but these were far less evident.

**What are these voices saying?** The central messages appear to be of staff working under pressure, confronting a lot of contradiction, particularly caught up in the demands of corporate policies and subject identities. Dealing with the barely articulated tensions between the way academic relationships are structured and the interventions of staff development personnel. In short, a set of contradictions which contrast markedly from the apparent rationality of mission statements or for that matter, of stated aims and objectives of staff development policies. The following chapter brings all the threads of the research together before moving on to discuss the findings within the context of universities as organisations.

## **CHAPTER 9.**

### **RESEARCH SUMMARY.**

#### **Introduction.**

The research was informed by an interest in the change pressures and processes in higher education during the 1980s and 90s and the role, if any, that employer led staff development plays in the change process. The research was conducted in 1994 in five universities of the North-East Region of England, which included two "older" and three ex-polytechnic universities. It is claimed that although a focus on five universities in one region cannot be seen as a mirror image of what is a highly complex and differentiated higher education system, the universities involved do represent key features of the complexity and therefore offer insights and experiences of relevance to the wider system.

The methodology involved discussions and consultations with the senior staff development personnel of each university and the distribution of 265 questionnaires to academic staff who had recently participated in staff development programmes. The questionnaire response rate was 41% (109 staff), of which 47.7% ( 52 staff) expressed a willingness to be interviewed. The actual interviews involved 43% (47 staff), the shortfall due to labour turnover or difficulties in contact during the period. The interviews took place between June and December 1994 and in all but one case at the place of work of the interviewee.

The response rate was not equally divided between the five universities and no attempt was made to contact non responders. Limitations in the way the research design was administered meant that reminders could not be sent. This was partly informed by a perceived need to maintain anonymity until the member of staff contacted, registered interest in participation. Given these factors and the relatively small number of academic staff involved, it is not claimed

that the views expressed by the participants are representative of their employing institutions. What is claimed, is that the research offers a voice to 109 academics in five universities about their careers, their working conditions and their experiences and views about staff development interventions in which they have participated.

As stated earlier it is difficult to know from such a limited study how accurate are the views expressed and how valid they are as a measure of overall practice. If one assumes for the sake of argument that it is accurate and representative, there are key messages from this and the previous two chapters which would benefit from closer scrutiny. These will be summarised here in two sections :-

Staff development policies.

Staff development practice.

### **Staff Development Policies.**

#### **1. Emerging Policies:**

Although the staff development policies of the five universities of this study vary considerably they are all at an embryonic stage. Two of the universities are working towards a comprehensive policy affecting all staff, the rest are focused mainly on newly recruited academics and selected other staff. Policies in being appear to refer almost exclusively to the programmes generated by centrally appointed staff development personnel although the two schemes that are more comprehensive are beginning to articulate the role of departmental and other staff. It is still difficult to escape the conclusion that centralised staff development is still a marginal activity and all are responding to external pressure rather than to any co-ordinated, institution wide demand or leadership.

## 2. Mission Statements and Staff Development:

Mission statements are no guide to practice. There appears to be a gap between departmental policies and centralised staff development and it raises questions about the amount of negotiation which took place in arriving at policies and practices. This apparent lack of agreed policy leaves newly recruited staff at the mercy of pressures which are often conflicting. Mission statements in regard to the development of staff can be seen more in terms of an imposed managerial rhetoric addressing an external rather than an internal audience. It embodies a managerial language which is more about institutional legitimisation, is more usually found in corporate capitalism and in its challenge to professional identities is a contested discourse. The result being of formalised staff development practice operating in a largely oppositional or indifferent climate.

## 3. The Case for Integral Staff Development Recognition.

It is argued here that the grist of being an academic automatically involves ongoing professional development and can be described as integral staff development. This includes research leave, conferences, mentoring, servicing committees etc. None of the policies explicitly forge links with integral subject - based staff development and that provided centrally by employers. This has major and uncharted implications not least that it can negatively affect motivation for corporate staff development given the dominance of subject orientation.

The investment in staff development across the academic career and the institution is not accountable because of the lack of acknowledgement of this aspect of development. Because it

is taken for granted and not defined, strengths and weaknesses in the way it is enacted cannot be identified. The two comprehensive schemes through the Investors in People Award Scheme could offer a vehicle for this to happen. On the other hand this is only likely to be the case if methods are established whereby integral staff development can be defined and credited. At the moment there is no system in operation which can even effectively monitor the participation in centrally organised staff development nor a consistent evaluation of its effects other than through successful completion or participation in particular programmes.

#### 4. Policies for University-Wide Development.

There are two universities which are trying to introduce more comprehensive and systematic approaches to staff development through the Investment in People Award Scheme. This has a number of strengths not least because it includes all staff, entails the structured responsibility of senior staff, lays down minimum time inputs and provides a vehicle for ongoing evaluation and assessment. It also provides some opportunity to cost the staff development input across the institution. On the other hand the minimum time inputs are modest and there is no requirement to conform to any national standard as far as content and method is concerned. None of the other universities in this study have a policy for the systematic development of all staff.

#### 5. Staff Development Budgeting Policy.

At the time of the research, all the staff development officers were working within a defined budget, parts of which were in some instances held in departmental budget centres. Their method of calculating the cost of centralised staff development differed markedly between institutions, making it impossible to arrive at an effective comparison. None had a means of

calculating opportunity costs, some method of effectively covering for staff attending courses and programmes would provide a vehicle for this to happen. At the moment the fact that staff are involved without systematic cover conceals the cost both financial and personal of the programmes currently offered.

## 6. Appraisal Policy.

At the time of the research there appears to be no comprehensive policy which connects appraisal systems and staff development other than through training for appraisers and in offering individuals help when needed. There are attempts being made to ensure feedback about staff development needs at the time of appraisal in at least one of the universities in this study but the procedure is too recent to assess its effects. There also seems considerable variability in who conducts appraisal interviews, the frequency and what happens as a result of them. There appears to be a need to clearly define the purpose and to monitor the effectiveness of appraisal systems.

## 7. Resourcing Policy.

The resources for employer-led staff development in terms of personnel, accommodation and budgets vary considerably and these appear to be only weakly connected to the size of the institutions. The differentiation however does appear to be related to the history and traditions of the individual university. It appears that where academic tribalism reigns, resource inputs are low except in the case of one of the universities with a well developed tribal culture, but where a long history of professional training and external validation, paved the way for a slightly more raised profile for central staff development.

The involvement of very senior personnel with demonstrable commitment to staff development appears to be very influential in resource allocation and this was more in evidence in the ex-polytechnic universities than the rest. Even the most generously resourced however, is of questionable adequacy given the size and complexity of these institutions.

#### 8. The Structural Position of Staff Development Officers.

The structural location of staff development personnel varies widely as does their access to influential senior management. There appears to be an inverse relationship to the age and tradition of the university e.g. the older and more traditional the university, the weaker the position of the officer/s. Job titles also seem to be of significance with managerial labels such as "director" more evident in the ex-polytechnic universities. The symbolic nature of institutional location and title, coupled with level of resource are major factors in the way staff development officers perceive their role and influence and one suspects, how they are seen by others.

#### 9. Policy Related to Mandatory Staff Development.

In addition to mandatory involvement in appraisal there is a distinct policy shift in four of the five universities towards mandatory training schemes for inexperienced, newly recruited academics. These schemes are exclusively focused on teaching and learning skills. They are new and there is evidence that the means whereby staff understand their obligations to attend and participate is variable and not systemic. Nor does there appear to be any worked out system of sanctions for non compliance either in part or whole. There is evidence that some

Heads of Department do not support the introduction of mandatory schemes and make it difficult for individuals to attend.

The mandatory nature of such schemes can be seen as empowering in establishing entitlements to development programmes but whether the emphasis on teaching and learning skills for prolonged time inputs is appropriate in the early months of appointment is open to question. In this regard, it can conflict with university wide priorities in regard to research and publication. The research suggests that in settings where research and publication pressure is high , the length of courses coupled with compulsion, negatively affects motivation.

#### 10. Award-Bearing Systems.

There are distinct shifts in four of the five universities towards award-bearing programmes. This appears to have two objectives, first to ensure some kind of measurable standard and the second to increase motivation to participate. There are indications from the research that the fact that a course is award bearing does not necessarily increase motivation to participate. This is said to be because qualifications allied to skill development in teaching are not relevant to career progression in ones subject. These awards are new, not nationally recognised as essential for appointment, if they were, the response might be different.

#### 11. Staff Development and Reward Systems.

There is widespread pessimism about whether involvement in development programmes will assist in promotion issues or other tangible rewards. In regard to probation the comments suggest that participants thought it would assist in probation assessments because it

demonstrated commitment. But some of those more oriented to research felt that the time commitments to attend and the focus on teaching could work against promotion.

## 12. Policies Based on the Voluntary Principle.

The traditional provision of short term inputs, covering a wide range of topics and based on voluntary recruitment is provided in all the universities in this study and the method exclusively used in one of them. The strengths of this policy is that it can lead to programmes responsive to expressed need, can be more acceptable because of voluntary participation and because it is more likely that they are time limited. The policy also embodies a number of major weaknesses. These include, that the voluntary nature of involvement does not address the needs of the resistant member of staff, is harder to monitor over time and can lead to ad hocism in provision. Non of the universities in this study had an effective means of plotting the participation of staff in these events other than through a head count of total participation rates.

The research indicates that there are four issues which embrace all of the above and they are:-

- a. The lack of a comprehensive and widely accepted definition of what constitutes staff development.
- b. Questions about the degree to which there are clear policies which foster a sense of ownership by senior staff for the development of other departmental staff.
- c. The degree to which it is appropriate to focus so much of the time input, on the newly recruited and whether the programmes offered to them are appropriate.
- d. Issues that arise out of academic drift fostered by research selectivity.

### Defining Staff Development.

As far as the first is concerned the major problem appears to be about boundaries. The subject/role relationship is central to this in that a lot of what could be seen as very effective staff development is subject generated but largely unacknowledged in staff development profiles. The emphasis on role, particularly when so much centralised staff development effort is focused on teaching and learning, serves to marginalise the full range of work undertaken by academics and also legitimises the emphasis on the newly recruited. Possibly of greatest significance in this regard is the lack of emphasis on management skills for senior staff.

### Fostering Ownership.

As far as ownership is concerned the research indicates that there are major gaps in the degree to which staff development programmes are owned by the people of influence in universities or by those who participate in them. In all of the universities of this study there appear to be questions about how far heads of departments feel a sense of ownership in regard to the efforts of central staff development personnel added to which the role of the vice-chancellor and other senior staff is very variable. The reports on senior staff and their responses to staff development suggests a wide and significant variation.

Some reports indicate a close supportive relationship others less so and for others considerable opposition. The response of senior staff in their day today interaction with junior staff involved in staff development programmes is very influential in the degree to which staff feel supported or not. The impression gained from the reports from staff who experience indifference or

hostility to their participation, is that many seniors see employer led programmes as an imposition in the working of their department.

#### Targeting Staff Development.

It may be the case that the reason why so much of the effort of central staff development is focused on the newly recruited is based on a view that senior staff, if consulted would not want to own and be responsible for the staff development policies which are emerging. In this sense it may be a conscious decision to introduce new employing policies through early intervention in the socialisation process of the new academic.

On the other hand, given that so much of the pressure on universities during the 1980s and 90s is to raise the profile of good managerial skills there is a case for arguing that priorities should be directed more to senior staff. There is no doubt from this research that senior staff are the significant actors in the degree to which junior staff gain from the opportunities open to them. This is shown not only in the way they respond to attendance on courses but also in the way appraisal is conducted.

This is not to argue that the needs of the newly recruited should be ignored. A great deal of effort seems to be invested in time intensive programmes and in award systems. Yet, the evidence suggests that programmes that are not time efficient seriously affect motivation and award systems are not always highly valued. The evidence suggests that the majority of the newly recruited would find it more valuable to have short-term, on - going access to guidance and on site evaluation particularly in the early months of appointment. Staff who had

experienced this were particularly warm in their praise about its effectiveness as a learning tool.

### Academic Drift.

There is evidence of academic drift towards a heightened research role in the ex-polytechnic universities which is driven by senior management as a means of securing status and resources. The research selectivity exercises can be seen to fuel this trend. The significance of this policy for staff development is experienced most directly in the ex-polytechnic universities in the growing pressure on staff to develop research profiles. This has particular training implications for those members of staff whose post graduate qualifications are not seen to have provided them with training in research and also where departmental guidance is weak.

As the academic qualifications of ex-polytechnic staff tend to have a lower profile than in "older" universities, the need for development in research-related programmes is most keenly felt by ex-polytechnic staff but not exclusively so. At the moment there are indications that these needs are being addressed individually by staff increasing their post graduate qualifications. The research indicates that staff are only aware of a generalised need to become more skilled and knowledgeable not how staff development providers could help.

### Staff Development Practice.

There will inevitably be some overlap between the policy issues outlined above and day to day issues of staff development practice. The intention however is to reduce the need for repetition wherever possible and to focus on the implications for staff development practice. The

following practice issues are indicated from the research some of which are about the career paths of staff which carry implications for effective staff development, others which are more centrally focused on what staff in this study say about their experience in staff development programmes.

1.     Reproduction Issues.

The staffing profiles indicate that there are reproduction issues evident particularly in the "older" universities. The high incidence of staff who are employed in the same institution or the same type of institution to the one in which they studied as students, suggests that the introduction of new practice will be more challenging for them than for those who have varied experience. This has implications for change agendas and the degree to which there should be differentiation in development experience dependent on career experience to date. The emphasis in the "older" universities on research and publication and the traditional, taken for granted culture of knowledge transmission, presents particular problems for staff developers seeking to introduce more systematic approaches to teacher training.

2.     Qualification Differences and the Targeting of Programmes.

The differing qualification profiles of the respondents, if reflected in the entire academic staffing profile of a university suggests that responses to particular staff development programmes will be affected. The widely held view of staff with Ph'ds in this study, that their post graduate career has equipped them with sufficient training in research, is not reflected among other staff. There is evidence that staff development focused on defining research

projects, studying appropriate methodologies and writing research proposals would be welcomed by non Ph'd staff.

### 3. Mandatory Systems.

The response to mandatory systems was mixed and depended to some extent as one would expect, on how prepared and supported staff felt themselves to be. Because the systems are new and there is some doubt about how firmly they are lodged in terms and conditions of employment, the means of communication was not systematic. There is also doubt about what kind of sanctions if any would be imposed for non compliance. The major problem associated with mandatory systems however were related to time inputs and the rigidity of curriculum.

If it was felt that time was not efficiently used by staff development personnel or that the curriculum was not relevant to work situations, the mandatory element contributed to resistance which was not conducive to learning. There is no evidence of resistance to the idea of, or participation in, training for specific roles referred to by earlier researchers in this field. The pressures experienced by the newly recruited do however raise questions of the type and length of programmes which should be mandatory in the first year. This will be explored later.

### 4. Response to Award-Bearing Programmes.

Award bearing programmes appear to have been introduced for a number of reasons - to establish credibility, to increase motivation and to set in place a measurable standard. Responses to this research suggest that award bearing is valued by a minority of staff but that in general there is little evidence that it increases motivation particularly for those already

highly qualified. The availability in some institutions for higher degrees related to central staff development programmes may go to some way to resolve some of these issues but presents problems of relevance given the dominance of subject based enquiry. If the awards were part of a national system and a significant component of appointment the response would probably be different. It is their relative irrelevance to what counts as an academic career which is central to this response.

#### 5. Reward Systems.

The previous paragraph links into the reward systems. According to this research there is widespread pessimism about whether participation in central staff development activity will contribute to promotion and other tangible rewards. This does not appear to affect motivation but the lack of clear policies and practices about the way participation is credited creates tension about what matters and where priorities lie. There is evidence that staff feel that participation should count in the reward system but this appears to be more based on hope than expectation. This is particularly relevant if the appraisal system does not credit participation and the feedback on whether this is done, suggests there is variability in this regard.

#### 6. Work Pressure and Stress.

The level of reported pressure was very high and many staff described serious symptoms generated by stress. Staff development programmes can unwittingly add to the pressure by placing other calls on precious time, though the main location of the pressure appears to be generated in departments. This is not conducive to good learning particularly if the framework and the content of programmes does not appear directly relevant to the felt needs of staff.

There was evidence that many staff who felt additional pressure because of their participation in programmes felt powerless to intervene in productive ways. Staff developers cannot resolve work pressures which are institutionally driven but there is a need according to this research, to articulate the problems to senior decision makers and to consider policies and programmes that are supportive to staff particularly when they are most vulnerable.

#### 7. The Role of Departments in Staff Development Practice.

This research suggests that departments are crucial in the way staff benefit from staff development programmes. The overall impression is that whilst some staff are encouraged and supported, the majority encounter either indifference or opposition to their participation. This is most evident in relation to mandatory, award-bearing courses which are by definition more time demanding. The fact that newly recruited and consequently vulnerable staff find themselves in the middle of a hidden or barely articulated agenda, particularly when policy formulation is unclear and incomplete, creates problems for staff developers in the facilitation of learning. According to the responses to this research there is urgent need to address the relationship between departmental seniors and staff development personnel in the definition of institutional policies and the means by which staff are supported in their implementation.

#### 8. Appraisal Practice.

This research indicates that appraisal is not working if it is seen as a tool to assist in the overall development and assessment of staff. In spite of the fact that all appraisers undertake some preparation for their role, the variability in performance and the inadequacy of some of the

methods employed suggest that with notable exceptions policy is not being effectively practised. Appraisees, particularly the newly recruited take the process seriously and take time to prepare. This is not so evident in regard to appraisers if the reports from appraisees contributing to this research are reflective of general practice. This is compounded by the lack of any overall system about how appraisals will be used.

There is evidence in three of the universities in this study that attempts are being made to ensure that appraisal systems are more closely allied to staff development. This is most evident in the two universities who are preparing for Investment in People Award Schemes but also in another by requiring feedback from appraisals in regard to staff development needs. These are still at an embryonic stage and practice appears to depend at the moment on departmental practice which is variable in quality, content and commitment.

#### 9. Participant Opinion of Staff Development Programmes.

This research indicates that for the majority many aspects of the programmes experienced were favourably received. Learning took place and staff were more reflective practitioners as a result. Many found that they were able to practise more imaginatively even when the departmental climate was unfavourable. There was a small number who were resistant to the entire process and it is doubtful if the most skilled and sensitive of interventions could have altered their views.

It is also the case that there is no widespread call for staff development programmes to be conducted by other people except where specific area of subject expertise is required. There was no indication that staff felt inhibited by programmes conducted by internal staff. The

programmes that were seen to be particularly useful were short-term in time commitment and practically orientated to the problems and issues that staff were encountering at the time. This is not because of a resistance to theory but about methodology and immediate relevance.

The reports indicate however, that there were serious problems particularly in the certificated teacher training programmes. It needs to be borne in mind that these are the programmes that will generate criticism, from an audience whose daily life is about criticism, if practice falls short of theory. It also needs to be remembered that this research cannot claim to be representative and may have been the repository of those with the greatest axe to grind. On the other hand, the consistency of the comments leads to the conclusion that the policies and practices could be revisited to see if they do embody a consistent model of good practice.

One of the most pervading impressions is of staff "being done to" rather than working alongside the facilitators. This was most obviously expressed in terms of time, on the one hand the total time required to attend and on the other, the use of time during attendance. It was also reflected in comments about the process of learning, of methods not explained and debated - for example the mixing of faculties on the assumption that the generic elements of facilitating learning, overcame the problems of learning context and environment. The methods used do not appear to have been subject to collective systematic analysis about their relative strengths and weaknesses. For example, how much learning could be self directed and how much rested on the need for the "group" to be together and if together, how to use the collective. This was reflected in the frequent comments about the use of handouts in relation to lectures or what appeared to be the standard practice of lecture, small groups and collective feedback. In this sense missing golden opportunities to connect the message with the method.

Some of the accounts if accurate were less about shortcomings in the methodology and more about bad practice, of facilitators booked for sessions to which the time allocation was too generous. This led to sessions that were "padded out" or involved needless repetition. For staff under severe time pressures this proved to be particularly galling and often led to oppositional behaviour. Other views along these lines were about the predictability of some of the methods used to generate participation, such as breaking up into small groups when the rationale was not clear and when what appeared to be happening was habitual rather than androgogical.

These are all details. At the heart of criticisms is of staff not being consulted in meaningful ways about their needs and therefore not owning their own learning. There appears to have been little or no consultation before involvement and an assumption made that all the participants had the same needs. There were numerous accounts of attempted consultations by staff developers during the programmes and opportunities for participants to plan their own learning. This appeared to have been done within a fairly rigid framework of what needs to be covered and how much time it would take.

Of course one could ask why staff participants object, bearing in mind that this kind of practice underpins the vast majority of teaching for students. These connections and disconnections however do not appear to have featured in the sessions conducted by facilitators, thereby missing some potentially valuable experiential learning. The attempts by facilitators to gain feedback were often thwarted. In fact, many of those who criticised the process they experienced, had not fed back their views even though given the opportunity to do so anonymously. Sometimes this was out of regard for the staff development personnel but often because of a "getting through by doing the minimum" approach.

The picture that emerges is of some staff being well supported and carefully introduced to what is expected of them. The vast majority however are experiencing a lot of contradictory pressure, not least about their own identity within the university. Bombarded by messages from professional reference groups about what is important and from their employers, often via staff development officers, about corporate expectations. The impression of people managing uncertainty and dealing with contradictory pressure contrasts sharply with the apparent rationality of institutional mission statements.

### **The Difficult Path of Staff Development.**

One can well empathise with staff development personnel trying to establish a comprehensive system of staff training in the face of less than widespread support and acceptance and even less than adequate resources. The status as well as the role and function of staff development personnel is important in all organisations but particularly so in universities because of the emphasis on status and expertise in the daily institutional discourse. Staff development personnel no matter how near to the centres of power are relatively low in status in comparison with senior academics whose position of power and influence is vested in subject expertise.

A related question and difficult to address is, to what extent staff development can be seen as "a subject" ? It is evident from the interviews with staff development personnel that they are as much in the business of defining policy and practice as in its implementation. Many were appointed less by recognition of defined institutional need but under pressure from funding, validating and policy making committees external to the organisation. There are no universally agreed models for university staff development and it is little wonder if the way practice is

evolving appears to be based more on what can pragmatically be established than to an organisation wide plan. They operate within the context of the corporate plan but are left to implement something called staff development in organisations without a track record in this field.

No-one it would seem from this research evidence, nor from the literature, has the rule book on how to do centrally organised staff development in universities in spite of the wide variation in practice and the interesting work being developed in this field. It would not therefore be surprising if some of the ways that policy is being implemented is in fact reproducing practice, not always appropriately, from previous settings or from other institutional forms. It would be interesting to know more about the career paths of people appointed to organise staff development in order that their needs can be assessed.

This research does however raise questions about whether some of the forms of staff development being established are appropriate. For example, to what extent the concept of a course is an appropriate one, particularly for newly recruited staff who are under pressure to establish themselves in many areas of activity. It also indicates a need for partnership not only with the powerful interests in the university and beyond but with the individual member of staff in how development can be fostered.

There is no doubt, whether or not this research is representative and indicative, that the experiences of the participants suggest a need for staff development. This is particularly so for senior staff at a time of institutional challenge when roles and responsibilities are being redefined. A broader concept of staff development which would embrace all aspects of the

career including what is described here as integral staff development is clearly needed. This view is well summarised by Marriott (1988) -

"In a community such as a university, and in a community that wishes to remain identifiably a university, staff development broadly and flexibly conceived has to be one of the key responses to the imperatives of surviving, adapting and evolving."

Furthermore, the change processes experienced in the last decade are not going to disappear, the questions about the role of higher education and how it should be resourced are standing items on the agenda not only in Britain but across the world. Staff will need help not only in adjusting to new demands but in coping and responding to change itself and there is a case for arguing that this is not most effectively developed with the least powerful and influential members of the institution.

On the other hand the evidence from this research and the literature in general suggests that a broader concept of staff development which would engage all staff, in all aspects of their careers, will be difficult to establish and not purely because of limitations on resources. It has more to do with inherent cultural and organisational issues which need to be articulated and addressed before one could claim that a framework for staff development in universities is in place.

## CHAPTER 10

### COMPLEXITY, CHALLENGE AND CHANGE - a role for staff development?

In the early chapters it was argued that a change agenda is building which is primarily about making higher education more responsive to the needs of the society in which it functions and to do so within a more restricted fiscal framework. It is an agenda which is mainly but not exclusively defined by government with action legitimated by calls for greater accountability, cost effectiveness and servicing the needs of a changing economy. It was further noted that, this is an international phenomena and that the main mechanisms being employed by policy makers are through resource allocation systems mediated through quality assurance and research selectivity. It is most obviously reflected in widening access to higher education with proportionally less unit of resource, a shift to more market orientated competitive systems and raising the spectre of differentiated universities in regard to research and teaching institutions. A change to the culture of academe is seen to be an integral part of this process.

A growing lobby, associated with the implementation of securing and managing scarce resources at a time of differing demand, envisages a role for staff development as an institutional and individual change agent. This has led to an expansion albeit highly variable in scale and degree, of staff development resources, to the extent that all universities and colleges of higher education in Britain have some mechanism for delivering employer led staff development opportunities. On the other hand, it cannot automatically be assumed that a role for staff development is seen as necessary or that any interest is of long duration. Duke (1992) in his advocacy of universities as places where lifelong learning takes place, questions how far universities as institutions are learning and changing to new demands. He notes that an

international study of lifelong learning and higher education conducted by Knapper and Cropley (1985) made no mention of organisational or staff development and there was no apparent recognition of the need for institution wide learning.

This chapter will explore the issues raised in the change agenda within the context of the complexities of universities as organisations and the difficulties this presents to staff developers. It will lead to a discussion of how far the issues and limited research described earlier, leads one to the conclusion that staff development has a role to play in the way universities respond to the challenges of the latter part of the 20th century and beyond. These are not purely technical problems of resource management but rest in a complex of professional, political and economic considerations. If staff development has a role to play and the research described above is posited on the assumption that it has, the questions are about the shape and form that is necessary for it to be effective. On the other hand, it is also necessary to recognise the limitations of staff development in State-inspired change agendas which do not sufficiently address the complexity of university form and function. Although what can be called the staff development lobby, has been proactive both nationally and institutionally in determining the shape and form of the opportunities open to staff, the process in the mid-1990s can be seen as reactive to a range of government-inspired policies about the utilisation of resources.

Interest in staff development has waxed and waned since the 2nd. World War and at the moment, appears to be becoming an established, if still in many areas a marginal part of the functioning of the modern university. The renewed interest is not bought about because academics are lobbying their institutions demanding staff development opportunities, particularly of the kind organised centrally by employers. It has come about because of a

combination of external pressures on resources and expectations which highlight the need for institutional change. In addition " a small number of enthusiasts...surrounded by larger numbers of the sceptical and indifferent" (Marriot 1988) have been making a case for it and testing the water for some time. It is not therefore some value-free process around which consensus can be automatically assumed.

For employer-led staff development to be an integral part of the way universities work, in a way that impacts on all its staff, a number of potentially conflicting issues arise. Professional identities and traditions are challenged, donnish influence over the socialising process of the new recruit lessened, the taken for granted questioned and the power to operate independently of corporate concerns reduced. On the other hand, Duke (1992) argues that "conceived and developed with sensitivity to the culture and traditions of universities, staff development could assist them to manage their environments and advance their social purposes, without turning to anti-collegial and hierarchical modes".

The research described above indicates that there is still some way to go before staff development is seen as comprehensive and continuous for all academic staff and even more so for other staff in British universities. Furthermore it can be argued that staff development has even further to travel in developing ways and means that are sensitive to the culture and traditions of universities. Not because staff developers are insensitive to the qualities of universities in all their variety and complexity but because they work within a managerial paradigm which is in a state of flux and which is responding, often in a hasty manner, to externally generated change. In this sense, although currently more accepted as having a role to play, staff development is still marginal to the change agendas currently facing British higher education.

Of course there are enormous variations and the research undertaken in the North-East Region has highlighted some of them. The evidence that does refer to the national scene, indicates that in some settings enormous strides are being made and imaginative programmes developed which tie into a programme of activities which are responsive to need and which must be based on wide-ranging institutional legitimacy. Many instances of this are logged by UCoSDA No. 10 (1994) in an analysis of the question of continuing professional development. These are not however, general and British universities are still some distance away from having policies and practices which capitalise on the growth potential of all its staff in ways which make sense to the complexity of their working lives and which might help to create a climate where change can be seen as dynamic.

It is important to bear in mind however, that this is not some maverick occurrence but partly reflects national employment attitudes and practices and partly the peculiarities of universities as organisations and the way the academic career is institutionalised. Britain's poor record in investment in the training of its workforce is well documented and seen as a prime cause of its relative economic decline (Cassels 1990). It is said to have the worst record than that of other advanced nations. (Perry 1976, Keep 1989). "British enterprises are said to be more adept of poaching trained personnel than investing in and upskilling their own.....so 'poverty of aspiration' in terms of training or HRD is a feature of British corporate life".(Duke 1992) The fact that higher education by definition embraces some of the most highly educated (and trained) personnel in the country, does not necessarily insulate universities from the staff development malaise evident in other enterprises. In fact, it serves as a rationale for marginalising consideration of how the skills and understandings of staff can be maximised through managerial intervention. So, if the question of staff development in higher education

cannot be purely located in national trends, what is there about universities that contributes to this situation?

### **Universities as Peculiar Organisations.**

Part of the problem of studying universities as organisations is that organisational theorists are of the view " that academic institutions, being highly complex, follow not one but four main patterns or models of organisational behaviour" (Becher 1989) and in many senses can be seen as unique. There are several ways that the patterns or models are described, all of which are drawing similar distinctions but the most frequently employed are to see universities as embodying a mix of the following forms :-

hierarchical.

collegial.

anarchical.

political.

The fact that employer-led staff development in British universities is weakly related to the careers of its academic staff is partly then a reflection of the way universities as organisations operate and because of the influence of international career characteristics, rooted primarily in profoundly held value-systems centred on autonomy and collegiality. It is therefore not surprising that the trends in staff development in Britain are to a large extent mirrored internationally although in some countries such as Australia according to Elton (1995), enjoying a much higher profile than in Britain.

Of course there are variations but what does appear to be the case is that the emphasis on staff development in universities emerged internationally in the 1970s as a result of expansion of the system and perceived problems with a larger and more heterogeneous student body and staffing structure and has re-emerged from the mid 1980s out of a crisis in the resourcing of higher education. All of which are fuelled by problems in the national and international economy at a time of rapid changes in the productive systems of the “developed” world and major shifts in political and economic alliances. Within this macro framework, the ease or difficulty in which staff development policies within and between universities are defined and enacted therefore, has less to do with national customs and practices although they are clearly reliant and affected by national economic concerns. Important influences however are also to do with international features of universities as organisations and the way academic careers have evolved over time.

The research conducted in the five universities of the North-East region reflects the national picture that the university as an organisation is changing, the change being most manifested in the way that organisational decision-making is taking place. To varying degrees, staff development is part of the process of the changing nature of decision-making. This is most readily seen in the introduction of mandatory staff development systems for certain categories of newly appointed staff. But it varies considerably because there is "an assumption that personal development is the responsibility of the individual academic... that self development will be the norm and is often particularly noticeable in the case of senior staff.... the absence of provision for large-scale structured training and development bodes ill for many institutions' ability to cope with changes " (Keep and Sissons (1992).

Another and obviously related feature of the changing nature of universities is the apparent shift to a less elitist model of higher education. It is most evident in the growth in student numbers from 17% of the relevant age participation rate (18 to 21 year olds) in the academic year 1989/90 to 28% in 1992/3. In total, full and part-time student numbers have increased from 823,000 to 1,088,000 for the same period. (DFE. a. 1995) representing an increase of 103.6% between the academic years 1979/80 and 1993/4 (DFE. b. 1995). Furthermore, there is evidence of increased productivity by academic staff if assessed by student staff ratios. Because of the differential system of collating statistics between the “older” and ex-polytechnic universities and the new unified system is yet to publish, it is necessary to refer to these under the old binary divide headings.

These indicate not only a growth in student numbers, a growth in student-staff ratios but also the continuance of considerable differentiation between the two wings of higher education. For example, student staff ratios have increased from just over 8 to 1 in “older” universities in 1972/3 (AUT 1990) to 11 to 1 in 1989/90 and to 13 to 1 in 1992/3 (DFE a. 1995). It is claimed by AUT (1990) that productivity in what were UFC funded universities increased between 1979 and 1990 in that each member of staff was producing 20% more first degree students and almost 25% more higher degree students and that by 1990 the real value of the relevant unit of resource fell by almost 10%. The ex-polytechnic universities have traditionally had higher student staff ratios reflecting the greater emphasis on teaching in the way their role was defined. In 1981/2 student staff ratios in public sector higher including the polytechnics were 9 to 1 (DES. 1989) and by 1992/3 were 18.7 to 1 compared with the 13 to 1 for the same year in “older” universities. (DFE a. 1995). The growth in student numbers has also been most evident in this sector with a doubling of the size of the students population between

1980/1 and 1992/3 (Social Trends 1995) compared with just over 5% in “older” universities (Social Trends 1995).

To a large extent this is because of the growth in part-time entry and particularly among women with nearly ten times the number enrolling in 1992/3 compared with 1970/1 (Social Trends 1995). In fact the growth in the participation rates in England and Wales led in 1994 to a three year freeze on the number of FTE funded places which government would support even though the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals claim that the funding per student has fallen in real terms by 25% between 1990 and 1995 and is planned to fall a further 9% by 1997 (MacLeod and Carvel 1995). It is argued that the growth in student numbers and the relative decline in resources plus the increased emphasis on research as a mean of gaining and maintaining status is leading to a situation where students are increasingly getting a raw deal. They are being recruited in increasing numbers to generate income but the pressures and priorities on staff to undertake research means that students are increasingly being taught by cheaper part-time members of staff, nor is this a national but an international phenomena. Furthermore, in spite of the concerns expressed by the Higher Education Quality Council in 1994 about the lack of progress in the promotion of excellence in teaching in older universities the national evidence highlighted by Jenkins and Gibbs (1995) confirms the academic drift seen in the North East region research described earlier.

The significance for staff development is that the kind of complexities and contradictions in the changes referred to above are generating a demand for ways of helping staff to be more productive both in quality and quantity but the institutional factors at work mean that staff developers are in many ways having to read the institutional runes which are differentially interpreted both officially and unofficially. Furthermore, far from staff development being a key

part of the change agenda as has been argued earlier, change in higher education seems to be generated more by keeping the institutional feet close to the economic fire. It is through fiscal pressure that the modern university reacts to change agendas and in ways which highlight the tensions between professional education based on subject and that focused on institutional issues. In this sense staff development can be seen as reactive to the pressure for change but affected by the institutional complexity and contradictions in which they operate.

In order to explore the complexity of this situation in more depth it is necessary to examine the peculiarities of universities a little more. In particular the idea that universities as organisations embody hierarchical, collegial, anarchical and political form of organisational behaviour.

### **Hierarchical forms.**

This is based on the notion of a recognisable chain of command, predetermined procedures and specified roles. This form of organisational structure operates in most industrial enterprises although under the influence of Japanese managerial styles, efforts are being made to reduce some of what are seen as some of its less productive manifestations. Other occupations within this frame are the civil service and most obviously the armed forces. It sits uneasily within a university context because of traditions and values which support collective decision making processes. On the other hand, some hierarchical forms of organisation have long been evident simply because of the role that status plays in access to power and influence.

It is however a fact, as well as part of institutional fiction, that the role of academics whatever their status in day to day institutional decision making, runs in the face of hierarchical forms. A

prime example of what could be seen as symbolic of this process was the refusal by the Academic Assembly at Oxford University to grant Margaret Thatcher the customary honorary doctorate in the mid 1980s. It also would be difficult to predict, even in the new managerial climate, whether the academic assembly would be less powerful if such a similar decision arose in the mid-1990s. One suspects, however, that the influence of Machiavellian thinking might hold more sway than it did in the 1980s but that does not negate the collegial forces, particularly in the "older" universities, that make the choice of action unpredictable. At a less dramatic level is the role of the academic in the daily decision making in curriculum development, research entrepreneurship and scholarship.

It also seems to be the case that hierarchical forms of decision-making were and still are, more in evidence in the ex-polytechnic sector because of the pre-eminence and composition of the Governing Body and historical associations with local authority decision-making. In fact, in the negative report by CNAA in 1978 about the then Teesside Polytechnic all the criticism focused on the managerial structures and practices which were clearly seen in hierarchical terms. (Leonard 1981). This difference between the "older" and the ex-polytechnic universities is reflected in the research conducted in the North-East Region, where a more "top-down" policy was in evidence in the ex-polytechnics. The significance of the vice-chancellor was heavily stressed in the interviews with the relevant staff development personnel in ways which were not reflected in the "older" universities. On the other hand the importance of the role of heads of department and other "subject" seniors was evident in both types of institution.

This suggests that hierarchy in the form that would be recognisable in the civil service, the army or in many industrial and commercial enterprises is not evident in universities in spite of distinct trends towards a more sharply defined post Jarratt role for vice chancellors and

immediate seniors. The counterbalance, some would argue barrier, to more centralised control systems is because of other organisational forms at work. Of most significance in term of academic folklore and tradition is the question of collegiality, sometimes embraced in the concept of a community of scholars.

### **Collegial forms.**

A major reason why hierarchical forms of organisation are problematic in academic institutions, is in the words of Becher (1988) because "there remains a fundamental value in the academic community that the trade in ideas should be free..... the result is a strong sense of collegiality in which scholars are called upon to respect each others' intellectual independence regardless of age and position .... Authority is, in this tradition always subject, to ratification from below". Whether, in the mid 1990s claims of this nature can still be made with the same degree of confidence, or even if in the ex-polytechnic sector they ever applied in the same way, is open to debate.

At the heart of the collegial model, is that despite differences of sectional interests there is an overriding consensus about the overall purpose of the institution and that differences can be resolved through reasoned argument and compromise. It is argued by Hardy et al (1988) that collegiality thrives when there is a commonly accepted ideology and mission, as tends to happen in small prestigious institutions, or in departments with charismatic leaders or when there is sufficient slack to accommodate different goals. How it works in the day to day work of departments has been summarised by Charles Handy (in Bligh 1990) as a process of management by consent not consensus, where management needs to check, that what they

propose is acceptable. " Academics see themselves as a resource. They want the right to disagree based upon reciprocal respect and trust" (Bligh 1990).

If however Hardy and colleagues (1988) are right about the relationship between resources and collegiality it is likely to be less collegial and more political when declining resources intensify competition. It can also be argued that when the competition for resources, prestige and privilege intensifies, as happened in the 1980s and 1990s, it strengthens the moves to hierarchical forms of organisation and intensifies the inter and extra politics of institutional life.

Many academics see the pressures for change as an opportunity to break out of a set of historically determined approaches to higher education that have served to limit access, constrain discourse about curriculum in its widest sense and which support stultifying and to some extent, self-serving structures (Knight 1994 , Scott 1994). Others, it is claimed project a sense of being beleaguered and at a loss, a sense that the barbarian hordes are at the gates and the sole repositories of civilisation are within. This is well summarised by Barnett (1994) and his use of the work of Fritz Ringer (1992) who, whilst writing about academics in Germany at the turn of the century could have been referring to the contemporary scene in stating that - "it seemed to many of them that the world was increasingly dominated by blind economic processes, by the power of money and by the weight of numbers. "Mind" appeared to have lost its influence in public life".

This sense of an academic world increasingly dominated by bureaucrats, made worse somehow because many of the incumbents are more often than not recruited from within, pervades the literature. Barnett (1994) concerned about the fragmentation of academic specialisms into more and more discrete areas and in particular in response to post modernist thinking of

multiple realities and "anything goes", calls for a re-establishment of a universal discourse about the values which underpin higher learning as a means of recreating the sense of an academic community. It is however important to note the timely reminder of Scott (1994) in the same volume, that the looking back to the halcyon days may be misguided bearing in mind that fragmentation, competition, colonisation and protectionism are not strangers to academe.

Whether collegiality is more than a tolerance of difference or is rooted in some universally held values and beliefs, is important in thinking about the way staff learn about their job and how they should be helped to develop. This is even more the case if one is trying to detect an academic "voice" as distinct from a babble of sound (Barnett 1994) or a penetrating silence about what is distinctive about higher learning in general and universities in particular. This is particularly so if one is seeking response to the legitimate concerns of a society seeking more accountability.

It would appear to be the case, that the increased focus on employer - led initiatives in the last decade - appraisal, performance related pay, increasing casualisation of the workforce, trends towards massification and more pro-active staff development to name but a few, is different in character than say in the immediate post 1960s. Then the major concerns were about growth within an elitist structure and perceived problems about how to deal with staff, many with unfamiliar pedigrees and/or disruptive and unsocialised students. In this sense, one can see employer initiatives including the growth of interest in staff development, as intervening in the collegial culture because it leaves too much to chance at a time of institutional challenge.

It could now be seen that the tune is being more blatantly called from the funders of universities, than has hitherto been the case and that this has intensified the tensions between

the central administration and the traditional holders of power and influence as reflected through the Senate. Staff development can therefore be seen as caught up in this tension, which would go some way to explaining the competing pressures experienced by many of the respondents to the North-East regional research. It also goes some way to explaining the introduction of mandatory systems of participation which may have less to do with countering the reluctance of the newly appointed than challenging the power base of departmental seniors to determine priorities. It is interesting that the one university of the five which would claim to have the most highly developed sense of collegiality, whatever the reality of daily existence, is the one which is yet to introduce mandatory systems.

If there is some difficulty in identifying collegiality in terms of whether it represents a united front, if only at the level and purpose of discourse, it may be because other organisational forms are more to the fore. It may be that the idea that anarchical forms of behaviour or seeing universities as essentially political systems is more appropriate.

### **Anarchical forms.**

Here one would argue that part of the way one can understand universities as organisations is as a form of anarchy, which is "more anti-managerial than managerial, concerned with dis-organisation rather than organisation.... it stems from the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by academics."(Becher 1988). Here it is argued that because to some extent academics are independent of the institutions who employ them because their reference group is national and international, they are more able to resist managerial pressures. In any event their subject expertise makes it difficult, for managerialist interventions to succeed without their co-operation.

This was and to some extent still is supported by the fast disappearing concept of tenure. In fact one can see government policy mediated (not always unwillingly) by the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals in regard to tenure, not only about introducing flexibility into employment practice but also as a managerial tool to control anarchic tendencies among the staff. At the same time one must recognise that the academic Cantons' of this world will always be able to command a privileged position in the managerial scheme of things. In this sense Birbaum (1988) quoting Gouldner (1957) has significance in drawing a distinction between staff who can be described as cosmopolitans and those as locals.

The more one can be described as the former the less one is dependent on the internal or even national concerns of university survival and functioning and less likely to be interested in what can be seen as parochial issues. In institutions with large proportions of cosmopolitans, the conflicts between rank and prestige (the former often conferred by previous and current employers, the latter by extra - institutional professional reference groups) may weaken the administrative authority and increase the difficulties in co-ordinating activities (Birbaum 1988). Paradoxically universities have a vested interest in attracting staff whose status (and therefore independence) makes them difficult to control in the interests of corporate concerns.

It may be the case in some organisations that "training is the key component in the creation of commitment" (Martin and Nicholls 1987) but this cannot be predicted in universities. It is also questionable whether training or managerial style is a predictor of levels of commitment. Gallie and White (1993) in their study of institutional commitment in commerce and industry found that irrespective of involvement in decision making only a small percentage had a strong commitment to the organisations in which they work. In universities one of the key

considerations of those seeking to develop corporate commitment may well be the problem of commitment which is generated professionally rather than institutionally.

The vast majority of staff encountered either through questionnaire or interview as part of the research outlined above, demonstrated extremely high levels of commitment to their work often at considerable personal and domestic cost. Several described the social objectives of their work, for example - to help to provide irrigation systems in the third world; to contribute to conquering certain types of cancer; to provide educational opportunities to those most disadvantaged etc. Objectives of this kind were not rare occurrences in this research and were described with a degree of idealism that was notable. It also needs to be related to the diminishing value of university salaries and the fact that most of the staff who participated in this research, being newly appointed could no longer look forward to tenured employment.

If this research is a measure, the narrow objectives of the human resource management school of management, (see Coopey 1995, Weightman 1990, Martin and Nichols 1987) cannot be applied to universities in the same way as in other enterprises. The application of human resource management ideas are generated by a concern to foster institutional commitment as a means of arriving at better systems of decision-making, cost-effectiveness and enhanced productivity. In industries influenced by the Japanese style of management, such as Nissan Motors, it finds its way into an apparent flattening of organisational hierarchies mostly through the removal of differentiated terms and conditions of employment and through developing wide ranging consultation systems. By these means trying to generate a sense of ownership of the enterprise by all employees.

These approaches may well be important where the potential for alienation is high but the paradox in universities is that, in spite of the proletarianisation of the academic profession (Halsey 1992), commitment to "the work" still seems to be high but not necessarily located in institutional terms. This separation of the commitment to subject and institution could be expected to increase with the growth in the number of contract staff. It is argued by Keep and Sissons (1992) that "the failure of employers in universities to lobby against the increasing dependence on contract staff is passing the problem of structural job insecurity on to their employees to deal with as best they can" and it creates a situation in which "it is hard to imagine circumstances better calculated to elicit minimal commitment. It ensures that what loyalty such individuals feel will be directed towards their department or research centre... rather than towards the institution that employs them on such unfavourable terms." (Keep and Sissons 1992).

The managerial paradox therefore, is that although the growth in contract labour provides flexibility in the workforce for institutional objectives, and may help to counteract anarchic tendencies in staff, its potential for fostering division between institutional and subject loyalty increases. Furthermore, the trend to managerialism in universities manifested by the hardening of hierarchical tendencies as a means of effecting institutional change, runs counter to many aspects of traditional university decision making systems particularly as practised in the "older" universities. In many senses these more traditional methods of decision making were/are closer to the systems influenced by human resource theory. In this sense the recent trends in university management runs counter to the trends being developed by what are seen to be the more progressive managers.

It could be argued that this is because the task of university managers (itself a significant term) in the latter part of the 20th. century is not so much to lessen alienation but to challenge professional autonomy. In this sense, seeing that the way professional autonomy is manifested, negatively impacts on institutional goal-setting and resource allocation. This is particularly so if the description of universities as "organised anarchies" (Cohen and March 1974) still holds true. Here, the concept of the "negotiated order" discussed by Brown (1992) has relevance not only to describe a situation where there are differences of opinion but where there is a culture which allows for a variety of negotiations to take place which fosters a high degree of autonomy. It also has relevance in understanding when external or for that matter internal threat challenges the legitimated order. Furthermore, it might be possible to draw a relationship between degrees of anarchism, prestige and the numbers of cosmopolitans a university employs. The challenge of the corporate agenda being more severely felt the greater the prestige and the international marketability of its staff.

If there is a relationship, the difficulty or otherwise of the path that staff development officers tread in implementing corporate policies, will to some extent depend on the felt as well as the objective status of the institutions in which they operate. On the other hand, the lesson in Britain of the last decade is that no institution can (nor should) remain impervious to the demands, often articulated by government through its various offices, that universities be more accountable for their use of public funds and for their role in the economy. This will emphasise more the fourth pattern of organisational behaviour thought to apply to universities - the political.

### **Political forms.**

Here universities are seen as loosely knit or in the words of Weik (1976) "loosely coupled" systems of varied interests groups who move into and out of the decision making arena as their needs demand. The personal and or professional power of individuals and groups is a key factor in the way decisions are taken. Departments who attract the most money and the "best" students have the most power (Birnbaum 1988). Conflict resolution is important when political aspects reign and this is often achieved through short term expediency and compromise (Becher 1988). It also means that decision making within the institution will rest on the degree to which it is seen to be in the political interests of influential people in departments and faculties.

The approach to staff development described by the officers responsible for its implementation in the five universities described above, fit well into this frame with a great deal of emphasis placed on how politically effective they could be in their negotiations with senior staff dependent on the strength of the constituency they could gather around them. It also underpins the concern about the status of staff development and its structural location within the university in which it operates, some seeing that there is a need to pull ones political weight by being a department with the same kind of remit as other departments (Elton 1995).

To summarise, the four patterns perspective of university organisations and the related characteristics have been described by Becher (1988) thus:-

#### **Organisational Pattern.**

Hierarchical.

#### **Characteristic Features.**

Authority conferred from above.  
Recognisable chains of command.  
Predetermined regulations and procedures.  
Specified roles.

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Collegial.  | Authority ratified from below.<br>Equality of rights in decision making.<br>Decisions exposed to dissent.<br>High personal discretion.                   |
| Anarchical. | Authority eroded by personal loyalties.<br>Emphasis on individual autonomy.<br>Ambiguous goals; pluralistic values.<br>Influence based on expertise.     |
| Political.  | Authority deriving from personal power.<br>Conflict as basis for decisions.<br>Policies based on compromise.<br>Influence deriving from interest groups. |

He points out that it is not often that all four models are in full operation all at the same time but does suggest that the first two operate in the public domain and are reflected in the committee structures of the university and the latter two are more covert and therefore in the "private domain" (Becher 1988). The significance for staff development is that policies might well find themselves in the public domain through institutional mission statements and officers with titles and resources to implement practice but these may well be subverted by anarchic and political forces at work. The focus of the mandatory, certificated systems, which are in the main addressed to the newly recruited and least powerful, adds to potential for subversion. The fact that much of this effort is also heavily focused on teaching and learning when other priorities might reign does not lessen the subversive potential.

On the other hand, it is possible to see the organisational structures referred to above in pathological terms through an emphasis on order as a means of progress, instead of a valuable aid to organisational creativity. It is argued by Hassard (1993) that instead of organisational theorists being overly concerned with the factors which lead to greater order, post modernist thinking suggests that disorganisation, untidiness and flexibility is more likely to be an accurate

reflection of reality. In fact it may be the case that instability is needed in order to make progress in a world becoming increasingly unpredictable.

He quotes Lyotard (1984) who sees that "dominant forms of thinking have acquired legitimacy through reference to meta discourse and grand narratives... whereas post modernism refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable". If one follows this line of thinking, universities in all their organisational complexity may be better able to meet the demands of an increasingly unpredictable world and should guard against over prescriptive systems about the way its resources are structured. Whether one prescribes to post modernist thinking or not, in common with other organisational systems, universities cannot run away from the managerial challenges that increased responsibility and diminishing resources impose. Whether this is played out in the form of that evident in the 1980s and 1990s is still open to question but what cannot be ignored is that universities, particularly prior to the abolition of the binary divide, were a law unto themselves and although some of the autonomy could be argued as protecting freedom of thought and enquiry, it also served and continues to serve, elitist interests in society

### **Management, leadership and staff development.**

There are signs that change is taking place, appraisal systems are in place whatever the shortcomings in the way it can be experienced, quality assessment is now part of the assessment procedure, universities are becoming more accountable and some of the boundaries between academic, technical and administrative staff are to some extent being eroded. Many of these changes were documented with examples by the Fender Report (1993) whilst at the same recognising that not all were universal and that "adverse reaction to change is very common in

organisations....they include a fear of the unknown; a reluctance to change familiar working habits; a general feeling that change is always for the worse.."(Fender 1993). In calling for managerial development the report suggests that the suspicion is not that staff have been badly managed but inappropriately managed and that it is important for senior staff to be involved in their own learning in how to more effectively manage.

Those charged with the task of organising staff development as a form of managerial fiat are inevitably caught up in the complexities of universities as organisations, the contradictions and tensions which they represent and the degree to which they are effectively managed. The fragmentation of the academic community of concern to Barnett and colleagues (1994) is played out in the day-to-day workings of universities as well as in the nature of academic discourse. As such, universities are particularly difficult to manage in change terms, a difficulty which is not just focused on the process of change but more fundamentally about the target of change. For example there is a growing pressure to utilise staff in the widest possible sense, cutting across subject boundaries and status boundaries between academic and other staff and generating team approaches wherever possible.

Centrally located staff development officers can only contribute to this process not take major responsibility for its establishment. If it is to be brought about, it requires major and sensitive managerial inputs with leadership that commands respect. It is argued by Middlehurst (1993) that the kind of leadership that is thought to be necessary to respond to these changes which she describes as a transformational one, is where the emphasis is placed on vision, a clear sense of direction and building a corporate culture around common purposes.

It also seems to be important, to reiterate the obvious, that not all university managers are dealing with the same set of conditions. This is illustrated by House and Watson (1995) in comparing the two wings of the old binary system - "the former polytechnics, even before incorporation, were perhaps closer to the commercial - industrial model than to the collegiate....the temptation simply to reinforce this model has been considerable and it has not been unknown for vice chancellors of traditional universities to cast an envious eye at the perceived power of the director of a polytechnic".

If one sees part of the dilemma for staff development personnel is their role as part of corporate concerns in universities where the institutional form embodies the hierarchical, collegial, anarchistic and the political - the effectiveness of management to be able to institute staff development policies that can be operationalised is crucial. They may be charged with implementing policy but their ability to do so will depend on the degree of commitment to the policy which is manifested across the institution not just those with central managerial functions. They "walk a delicate tightrope..... often required to mirror and reflect institutional objectives and values...but .... are also at the forefront of change. This places staff development in a highly complex role... preparing staff to work in a system, undertaking leadership and the management of change of that system and preparing staff to work in the changed system." (Griffiths 1993).

The interviews with staff development officers in the North-East Region demonstrated that they were well aware of these dilemmas and in the three ex-polytechnic universities in this study they felt particularly supported in the role they were expected to play because of the strength of support from senior management. This was particularly so in regard to the role of the vice-chancellor who was described by two of the officers in terms of having the kind of

transformational leadership qualities seen by Birnbaum (1988) and reflected in the thinking of Middlehurst (1993) as one of the important ways that organisational change can be facilitated. Support to this degree was less well demonstrated in the two "older" universities and perhaps this is not surprising because the collegial, anarchic and political organisational features are likely to be more prominent in these institutions.

In this sense, if this research is accurate, one can see staff development officers in "older" universities walking an even more delicate tightrope than their ex - polytechnic colleagues. On the other hand, the commitment of senior management may not be reflected in the way departmental heads respond to central policy. The distinctions between the reported responses of departmental heads to staff development participation was not overly marked between the two wings of the ex-binary divide.

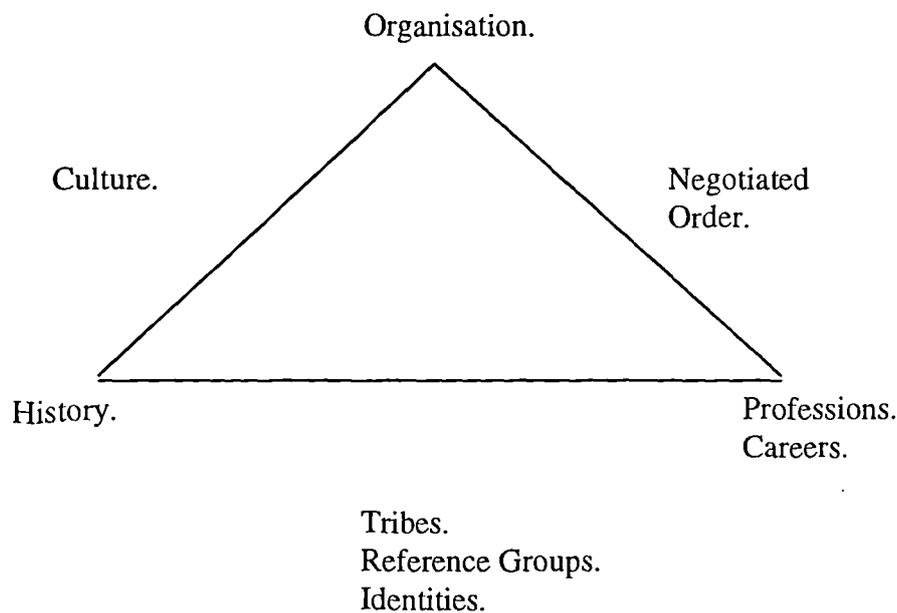
It is argued by Clark (1983) that universities are bottom heavy organisations in which one cannot expect major change to stem from top-down systems. It is probably harder to make this claim in the latter half of the 1990s than it was in the early half of the 1980s. It is still a significant factor, however, in spite of the legitimation afforded to top-down management by the Jarratt Report (1985) and has to varying degrees been reinforced in the decade after publication. Although in the past and possibly still clinging to the academic consciousness in some areas, the idea of central management as a form of servant leadership (Greenleaf 1973) made a lot of sense, but it is increasingly harder to detect under the current fiscal dominated climate.

The need to respond to changing conditions in the demands of government and other funders can foster the move to more centralised and hierarchical systems of decision-making. At the

same time one cannot ignore the amateur and time - limited tradition in university academic management. Here one can detect a similar set of taken for granted assumptions that have traditionally applied to teaching, that knowledge in one area can be the basis for practice in another. This is well summarised by Miller (1995) when he states that "there is no reason to expect that an eminent scientist, physician, engineer or lawyer who has attained a position of power and influence in managing a university should be particularly familiar with current debates on organisational analysis or contemporary evaluations of managerial style and strategy."

The traditional alliance between the administrative and academic leadership has meant, that questions of managerial training for academics has not featured large. Even the Jarratt Report (1985) advocacy of a greater managerial role for vice-chancellors did not see a major shift in the servicing function of the Registrar and staff. The assumption being that the managerial decision-making will still rest with the academic body via the vice-chancellor and be implemented by the administration. Of course, the relationship between senior academics and administrators is not clear cut. But whereas one would expect relevant professional training for administrative staff, it is still not a requirement for academics who find themselves in university management. Yet at a time when universities are confronting increasing complexity in decision making the question of staff development for all levels of management cannot be ignored. As far as heads of departments are concerned this is already beginning to be recognised. The idea of academic leadership as informed by ideas about "the primacy of the individual scholar... together with a strong belief in decentralisation and light managerial steerage, on the grounds of effectiveness, freedom, motivation, as well as more productivity in the academic sense" (Davies 1995 quoting Clark 1987) can no longer be sustained.

Heads of departments are now not only required to provide academic leadership but have to deal with all kinds of accountability procedures through performance indicators, manage departmental budgets and deal with appraisal systems. In addition they have to acquire "the political, technical and professional skills to cope with the pressures generated" (Davies 1995). The overwhelming impression from the academics in the North East region to the questions posed to them which not only indicated their own situations but described in many ways the situation of colleagues is that as a professional group they are dealing with a number of barely articulated tensions. These are a combination of institutional culture, the negotiated order being challenged or not and the type and system of organisation in which they work. This impacts on them as subject academics in which reference group/tribal issues were at stake and the questions posed by the whole, about their professional identities. Something of the interplay of these factors could be seen as thus:-



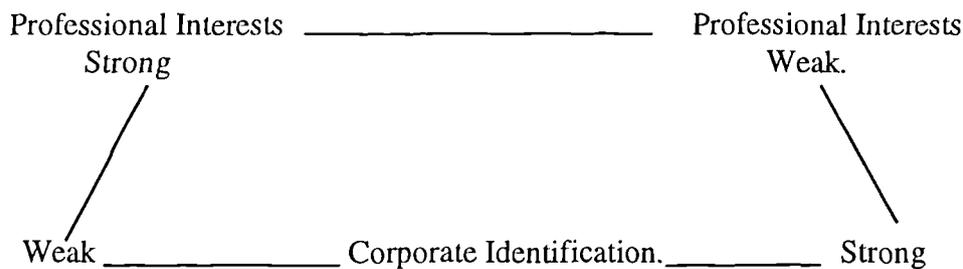
## **The Staff Development Agenda ?**

Arising from this, what kind of basic principles and practices could be employed which could engage this diversity of "being" in a positive way for the development of the profession and the institutions in which it operates? There are however some important considerations to note before moving on to speculate what shape this might take. First, the term university serves to conceal enormous diversity because of the highly individualistic ways that "older" universities and ex-polytechnics have evolved over time. This is not simply a diversity across but also within the old binary divide.

The five universities in the North-East region reflect this and they in turn differ in significant ways to those in other parts of the country. This is less the case in other "collectivities" of institutional form one could think of, say, the car industry. The methods of production and the complex relationships in one car plant serves to generate familiarity with others in the same business. Part of the explanation is that the production of cars uses similar technology to produce a relatively predictable product. In universities the product, even in the most predictable area such as graduates, is highly differentiated.

Furthermore these differing tradition and functions are profoundly influenced by the degree to which professional as distinct from corporate interests reign. Where the professional interest is strong such as in the Ivy League universities, or with the cosmopolitans in others, one could expect to find that corporate identification is weak and vice versa and that there will be all kinds of gradations along this axis.

These interactions can be seen in the following terms:-



It would be tempting to see this diversity as a problem rather than an opportunity. Of course it is a problem if the major influences on policy are elite and profoundly unaccountable institutions and one supports interests which could democratise the higher education system. In spite of the challenges that have confronted higher education in the last twenty years or so, Scotts' (1994) assertion that in spite of current problems we now have a more accessible and accountable system is right. Diversity either within or between universities is not in itself a problem. The Open University has proved that it is possible to pursue democratic objectives, be very different from other universities and not only thrive but also be a standard bearer in curriculum development and in androgogical skill.

It does mean however, that staff development policy and practice needs to reflect not ignore the diversity. To state the obvious, staff developers are not employed in the same kind of organisations as the Imperial Chemical Company or Nissan Motors. Universities are not owned by shareholders, though the concept of stakeholder by which one could mean the electorate at large as well as employers, professional organisations and students might have merit. They are also international organisations and some of their staff cannot be seen within a narrow notion of employee. This serves to emphasise the tensions and contradictions in the employment circumstances of academic staff which cannot be marginalised in the considerations about how their services should be utilised.

To some extent this need to reflect internal and external diversity is happening, in that each university is doing its own thing with central organisations such as SEDA and UCoSDA trying to share good practice and stimulation. This, however, seems to be based on ideas of what one can get away with or achieve within limited frameworks, given the autonomy of institutional decision making in this regard. On the other hand, some of the kind of quality control systems that have been introduced in the past few years have significantly eroded institutional autonomy and there is no reason why staff development should be left to organisational chance. This is not to argue for national staff development programmes although the kind of national quality audit model advocated by Elton (1995) does not in itself seem a bad idea. It is, however, a case for a clearly articulated and comprehensive staff development which effectively meets the needs of all staff.

Somehow, the way it needs to evolve is by working with diversity in a positive rather than accommodative way. This could be explored by addressing questions about the shape and form of staff development policy by thinking about mandatory versus voluntarism, minimums rather than maximums, corporate as distinct from professional and individual as distinct from team or group. As far as means of implementing policy is concerned the question of ownership seems paramount in order that resources and how they should be managed are determined. These issues form the basis of the following conclusions.

## REFLECTIONS FROM PRACTICE. - CONCLUSIONS.

The discussion so far has traced the renewed interest in the degree to which higher education is serving the needs of the economy, an even greater interest in reducing the unit cost of higher education and the sharpening interest in the utilisation of human resources in this process. The growth in student numbers during the 1980s and 90s has been demonstrated leading some to argue that British higher education is moving towards a mass as distinct from an elitist system. This is allied to the apparent increased productivity of staff particularly in regard to teaching and the debates about whether this is at the cost of quality in student experience. The increasing demand for accountability not only in higher education but across the professions is seen as significant in this process and although traced in part to the preoccupations of a particular government can also be seen in the responses of other political parties not only nationally but internationally.

The pressure for greater accountability and control is driven through fiscal mechanisms, informed by a belief in the efficacy of the market and mediated through systems of quality assessment. The main intention being to challenge the culture of autonomy seen to limit the role of higher education in its service to the economy and in the process, attempting to restructure the tribal relationships within academe itself. This process is seen to have a number of significant outcomes not least in the changing terms and conditions of staff, the removal of tenure and the growing use of contract staff being but two examples. There are also a number of unintended consequences, the most evident being a growth in student numbers due to unfettered entrepreneurship by institutions which place increasing demands on the public purse. This led in 1994 to a three year limit on recruitment in England and Wales. It is also evident in a process of academic drift in which the emphasis on research as part of the key *raison d'être*

of being an academic, institutionalised in the “older” universities, is being increasingly manifested in the ex-polytechnic universities because of the relationship between research assessment and income generation .

It is within the context of some of these changes that the changing nature of the demand for more centrally organised staff development has been examined and the growth in the resources allocated for its implementation. This has included the extreme variability in provision, issues that arise from the structural location and status of staff development personnel and the continuation of the main focus of activity on the newly recruited. Some of the suggested ways of raising the profile of staff development has been discussed including differing institutional locations. The trends towards mandatory participation and the introduction of award systems for centrally organised staff development programmes have been explored.

Universities as organisational entities have been discussed and the contradictions and tensions that this presents in the employment of academics. This questions the degree to which the interests of academics can be seen as more located in national and international reference groups rather than the immediate concerns of the institutions in which they are employed. The growth of managerialism has been noted and the way it runs counter to some of the management and employee relationships being developed as a result of human resource management ideas. It is argued that the growth in employer led staff development activity is in part a reflection of a more managerialist climate and can be seen to challenge, particularly in the “older” universities the negotiated order in the relationship between academics and the universities in which they work. Differences in the way managerialism is enacted within the higher education system is evident and seems to be more highly profiled in the ex-polytechnic

universities which to a considerable extent is due to their particular historical and institutional development. It is also reflected in a more pro-active and systemic approach to staff development and the allocation of greater resources for its implementation. At the same time it is important to note that there is considerable variation within the sectors that have been described as "older" and ex-polytechnic universities and this cannot be accounted for purely in terms of size.

The discussion is supplemented by research conducted in five universities in the North East region during 1994 which focused on the experiences and opinions of academic staff who have recently participated in centrally organised staff development programmes. The universities included three ex-polytechnics with varied histories and traditions, one "ancient" university and one that could be described as a "redbrick" university. Although caution is necessary in findings from only five institutions, they do illustrate some of the variability of form in British higher education and reflect the macro concerns within which higher education operates.

Senior staff development officers in the five universities in the region participated in the research and 109 academics returned questionnaires of which 47 were interviewed at their place of work. Again, caution is necessary in seeing the participants of this research as representative. The experiences and opinions described however, do relate to many issues raised above and in the literature and offer some interesting insights for debate. This is particularly so in regard to the competing pressures experienced by academic staff, the differing ways these are experienced, the variability of experience in staff development programmes, problems in departmental support systems, limitations of the appraisal system, views on award bearing staff development programmes, the degree to which mandatory

participation is empowering or stress inducing and the degree to which staff understand the way development personnel could offer services other than in teaching methods.

So what conclusions can be drawn from a focus on these issues? It is evident is that there are conclusions to be reached which operate at a number of different levels, from the issues confronting British society to how a particular staff development service might operate within the institutions in which it works. Ranging across such a spread of issues is not easy and there are ever present dangers that the macroscopic will swamp the microscopic or vice versa. What is evident is that the relatively minor issue of staff development for British academics is part of a much wider canvass and is essentially tied up with the changes in the political economy since the 2nd World War. Here one can see the early preoccupations of the advocates of staff development operating in a climate of institutional growth, a belief in the power of economic growth to deliver the resources, an optimism about the future of Britain's role in the world and an acceptance of the grand narratives of modernism.

In the 1990s, a different climate exists which some can argue is a crisis of capitalism in the so called developed world, in the light of competition from newly industrialising nations. Others see a wider cultural fracture which is generated by a loss of belief in growth and progress and in the efficacy and relevance of grand narratives and apparent rationality that they embody. Therefore, "the problem" is one that applies to all so called "advanced" economies. This may well be true and would account for the apparent thrashing about for major political and economic solutions to problems which appear to be subject to redefinition almost daily. The international concern with public expenditure and the economic pay off from institutions dependent on State support and which can be seen as directly related to workforce planning is

just one manifestation of this process. Yet if one tried to establish the future workforce needs of Britain in the next 20 years for example, one is as likely to be wide of the mark as on target.

On the other hand, it can also be argued that, although this is international in character, there are particular ramifications for Britain unsure of its role either in terms of industrial output or in terms of its social and political significance. This can be seen in a myriad of ways, not least the ambivalence towards European membership and international relationships in general. Is Britain still a world power, if so on what basis - if it is not, what is its position? At a less exalted level but no less significant is what being a modern (or post modern) society means in British terms. Is modernity in this context becoming an island not dissimilar in role to that of the Cayman Islands where production of marketable goods is giving way to the provision of financial services to the world? If Britain is to have a productive base in goods as well as services, what form does this take, is it dependent on a small highly skilled workforce who through their taxes are responsible for a growing army of the unemployed and productively unnecessary. If so, where does social justice lie in the distribution of goods and services and how are these questions going to be addressed? So one of the major issues that must form part of the conclusions, is that the change process is being conducted within a context of considerable ambiguity about the way that the concept of modernity applies in Britain.

The answers in the 1980s appeared to be focused on reaching to the past for a resurrection of the old glories and for the re-introduction of what were perceived to be more efficient market mechanisms for bringing changes in the utilisation of resources in responding to new demands. Higher education in particular but also the education system in general was identified as a locus of change not least because they were seen to be part of the problem but also in the "right" climate as a possible part of the solution. The growth in interest in academic staff development

and in a wider context, the debates about what is appropriate training for working in schools can be seen as an attempt by the British state to restructure the education system.

The difficulties however lie in what has been defined as problematic and whether the analysis is adequate to the task. No-one could argue that the elitism and lack of accountability of British higher education was good for any society whatever its confidence in the world order or that the education system in general provides good opportunities for all its citizens. Nor could one seriously dispute the need for accountability of the curriculum content of the education system and a more public analysis of standards. The problems lie in more fundamental questions about the role of the education system in the way the relationships between differing sectors of the society and the values which should underpin resource allocation are defined. Furthermore, these questions do not lend themselves to easy analysis with as many debates about them within as there are between political parties.

If one of the roles of higher education is to ensure that such debates are as informed and as rational as possible, the pressures to oversimplify the relationship between higher education and the political economy needs to be approached with caution. In the past, the meta-discourse about the relative values both morally and functionally of differing forms of political and economic life might have made sense but the post modernistic arguments about unpredictability and the need for coping with the unimaginable, may have more relevance given the changes in the world order during the latter part of the 20th. Century.

Consequently, although one can argue with some justification that the increased access to higher education referred to in the previous chapter is a major achievement of the last decade, that universities are more accountable and some of the spurious distinctions between differing

sectors of the system have been exposed; that the growth in achievement of young people in “GCSE” and “A” level results suggests that the education system in general is becoming more productive, this alone does not address the more difficult questions about the kind of society in which it operates. Increased access and achievement by students and the increasing emphasis on research indicated in the North East study and elsewhere, can be seen to be a positive contribution to the knowledge and workforce requirements of the society. On the other hand, there are problems if the increased output of students is rooted in notions of vocationalism for which there are no or declining vocations or the increase in research output is more to do with income generation allied to institutional status and career progression.

It is important however, in recognising the contradictions and tensions of the macro-context in which social policy operates not to feel disabled from reaching conclusions about the change strategies that are in operation. It is argued here that one of the change strategies during the 1980s and 90s has been addressed to challenging the professional autonomy of academics in the way higher education is structured and the way in which it operates. Staff development is seen as one of the mechanisms in which this strategy works, although from the outset one must recognise that fiscal controls and quality audits are the key levers of change. Staff development can be narrowly conceived as a managerial tool and some of the writers above clearly see it as a means of bringing about systemic change which fundamentally alter the cultural mores of the system. In the process, dependent on one’s value-position seeing the system becoming more “relevant” and or more accessible to those previously denied its benefits.

The problems of a scenario focused on academic culture lie partly in the complexity of institutional and professional reference groups, the latter as much international as national in nature but also in the varying ways that professional autonomy is defined. What does appear to

be significant is that the inequality in the higher education system generates inequality in institutional accountability. Those with the highest status generated through national and international professional reference groups able to marginalise themselves from the accountability processes which affect “lesser” mortals. It is a process that is complicated by the interests of employers who have a vested interest in recruiting staff with high professional credibility.

On the other hand, employees with high national and international credibility may have less dependence on institutional affiliation. Consequently, one of the conclusions is that the strength of institutional staff development profiles is essentially interacting with the perceived and objective status of its key academic staff. Furthermore, the attempts by the state to control the cultural gurus with their ability to disproportionately determine academic discourse, is yet to be achieved. In fact, it will become harder given the rapidly developing information technologies in which national and international discourse is increasingly part of day-to-day work.

Another way of looking at this and which probably affects all academic staff to a larger or lesser degree, is in the challenges staff development makes to what is defined as the negotiated order, whereby professional and institutional requirements are in a state of perpetual negotiation between parties that historically resist hierarchical dictat. The introduction of mandatory policies can be seen as a direct attempt to intervene in the way the relationship between managers and employees is conducted. Not surprisingly therefore institutions with a history of more top-down approaches to the relationship and where the concept of negotiation holds less sway, are likely to be more successful in the introduction of mandatory systems.

It is evident therefore that where professional affiliations are strong the institutional affiliations are potentially more limited. The variations in provision and acceptance of employer-led staff development as a systematic part of the academic staff career needs therefore to be seen partly as a function of institutional history but also of deeply held values about the relationship between professional autonomy and institutional interests which are experienced to differing degrees. Contradiction and complexity therefore are inevitable and programmes that ignore the nature of the complexity are likely to be less effective. It also means, given the variety of institutional form within the British higher education system that the institutional responses will and should be varied.

If one accepts the need for a staff development policy and practice which is more consistent and comprehensive than is generally available for all academics at the moment, it cannot ignore the challenges of the issues discussed above. In fact, there is a strong case for arguing that because of these complexities - changes in society, uncertainty about the political economy and in consequence the role of the education system, opportunities for systematic staff development are essential. Similarly, if staff are required to facilitate more and more student learning with less resources and to expand research and scholarship output, they need help which is not confined to the traditions and practices of their departments no matter how well intentioned. On the other hand, a staff development policy that ignores or tries to subvert the logic of higher learning which is increasingly competitive both nationally and internationally is likely to be less effective.

So what does this mean for employer-led staff development given the complexity and variety of professional and institutional demands? The research in the North East region referred to above, suggests that staff development as currently conceived is working within a complex

mixture of accommodation and subversion rather than one which is able to challenge the dysfunctional aspects of organisational complexity. Furthermore it is yet to develop policy and practice which capitalises on complexity. This is mainly due to weak policy formulation, problems in the ownership of policy that does exist and the relatively low status of those employed to implement policy.

It could also be added that explanation for this state of affairs lies in the fact that there are significant disconnections between what powerful academic interests in higher education feel are staff development priorities and those of management, mediated through staff development personnel. As such it is less about the absence of policy, though this is a factor, but non-acceptance of policy by significant actors that is significant. The current attempts being made to introduce institution-wide schemes and to change terms and conditions of employment to include mandatory participation are more indicative of the problems and not necessarily the best solution to them, though they could be the basis of what might be a more dynamic process.

This is not only because of disconnections between corporate interests, for example, in regard to teaching more students with proportionally less resources and professional interests in furthering research and scholarship, though again, these factors cannot be ignored. A contributing factor must be that the concept of staff development is too narrowly conceived by institutional managers and is rooted in top-down definitions of need. An allied problem, but to a large extent arising from the above, is the role and status of staff development personnel and their relationship with varying influential forces within institutions

The North-East region research suggests that, although many of the participants of programmes reported difficulty in their involvement, they were not resistant to training per se. Important questions were posed, however, about whether their specific needs were being taken into account. On the other hand, there were many reports of their seniors being resistant to their involvement. There is a need to know more about the basis of resistance by senior staff to employer interventions in the development of departmental staff as well as a closer examination of their needs in the task of resource management.

The most common explanation is that the kind of resistance referred to by the respondents of this research and in that conducted by Matheson (1981), and Brown and Atkins (1986) is rooted in notions that subject based expertise and collegial interaction are sufficient preparation for the complexity of tasks expected of the academic. Another possible explanation and one which might be more relevant, could be a view that departmental definitions of need are not necessarily matched with those of the organisation as a whole.

If this is true it would be interesting to know whether this is due more to faith in departmental processes or a lack of faith in centrally provided services. There is considerable variation in the apparent legitimation of staff development services across institutions, a variation which is most obviously seen between the ex-polytechnic and "older" universities but also evident within both sectors. However, even the most generously resourced, seem to be operating at the margins and with the least powerful. There are exceptions, such as programmes specifically focused on management and supervisory skills offered annually by one the five universities of this study and highly praised by UCoSDA (1994). The operative word however is "offered" and these kind of interventions with more senior staff, operate overwhelmingly in the voluntaristic tradition.

What appears to be the case at the moment is the need to convince more senior staff across the institution that staff development is not something that can be taken for granted, it needs to be planned and monitored and there is no automatic challenge to professional priorities by the introduction of central systems. Few of those concerned with the maintenance and development of higher education can doubt the need for the kind of opportunities outlined in three of the more recent documents on staff development. One calling for a more coherent and comprehensive approach (USDU 1994) one for continuing professional development including all staff, as well as academics throughout their career (UCoSDA 1994) and applied to those in managerial positions (Fender 1993).

The questions lie less in whether organised staff development is needed, than in who needs it, in what form and how it should be organised. In varying ways Gordon (1995) and Elton (1995) see legitimisation of staff development personnel as a major issue, although their interest in furthering staff development is not described quite in these terms. The interest of Gordon (1995) in the way pressure to perform well in quality assessments will enhance the role of staff development, implies that legitimisation will stem from the stick of the league-table combining with the carrot of professional and departmental self-interest. The thinking of Elton (1995), however, is centred on the idea that legitimisation will be enhanced by the creation of staff development departments which will function on equal terms with other departments and be seen as part of, not separate from the collegiate culture. Such departments would have similar functions including research, teaching and the provision of award-bearing courses in the discipline of higher education.

He sees this as a solution to the current attempts to challenge "the most entrenched of academic attitudes, using a currently very low prestige approach" (Elton 1995), by which he means the present location of staff development officers in personnel departments. The problem is, that not all departments are of equal standing even if as he advocates, the proposed department secured a good reputation in research and publication and in its award bearing courses. It also seems to be running counter to some of the trends leading to the amalgamation of existing departments and it may be that in the long term, that the concept of the department will hold little currency. The creation of a department does not in itself solve the problem of legitimation particularly if some of the criticisms about staff development made by staff in the North East Region are a guide. They were not so much challenging the right of staff developers to do their job, though they were somewhat vicious if they felt it was done badly. They were more concerned with the priorities in staff development policy and the degree to which it conflicted with their own and their departments priorities.

It may be the case that institutional location is less significant than how staff development policies are reached and the degree to which all interests within the university are accommodated in order to secure maximum ownership. Out of this dialogue one might establish legitimation for the policy and practice from which the acknowledgement accorded to staff development officers would be reflected. At the moment it appears that staff development policies and practices have emerged as a manifestation of top-down decision-making, introduced more out of expediency than careful analysis of need and principle. It is inevitable, given the way staff development has been accommodated in universities, that a lot of the initiative for determining what is needed and how need is met has been left to staff development officers.

A greater shift to what Elton (1995) describes as turning staff development inside out in order to start with problems that are looking for solutions which require staff development, could be the start. Of course many staff development officers would claim that is what they do e.g.

Problem 1. there are more students and less resources; Problem 2. most university academics do not hold teacher training qualifications and older members of staff are not used to the size and composition of the new student population. Answer - provide teacher training, certificated to increase motivation and mandatory to control the back sliders.

To continue with this kind of need and solution definition to illustrate a wider point. If one assumes for the moment that this is an accurate assessment of need and that introducing mandatory systems for the newly recruited will eventually lead to all academic staff being trained to teach. There are important questions about the degree to which unilateral action on the part of British university managers, to determine the range of professional as well as academic qualifications of employees as a condition of continued employment, would be supported by funding bodies. Evidence from school-based education suggests that the current government is not only challenging the form and content of teacher training but also whether it is a necessary requirement in some subject areas. At the moment these questions are being fought out by teacher unions interested to maintain the professional recognition and status of their members.

At this point in time, the professional status of academics does not rest on them holding teaching qualifications any more than that there is a requirement for the vice-chancellor to hold a degree in business administration, desirable though both might be. So the efforts of the Staff

and Educational Development Association (SEDA) to establish national validation of teacher training courses for academics, is not simply about the establishment of standards or the accreditation and transferability of qualifications. It also has major political and professional ramifications which do not appear to have featured large in the staff development literature.

If one ignores the wider political and professional ramifications of certificated teacher training for academics there are other issues about the trickle effect of introducing systems exclusively focused on new recruits no matter how pragmatic the decision to do so. The major problem is that it could take a long time to arrive at a state when all academics will have been through the system. It also raises questions which need to be asked of all good teachers - is the student motivated to learn and is this the best way of maintaining motivation? The evidence from the five universities research suggests that the majority were motivated to learn but the use of the certificated course method was not universally favoured.

There are also questions about whether "a course" which is not reinforced by continuous development opportunities, can foster the kind of understandings and skills which will assist staff with what is likely to be a constantly changing learning environment. Some of the criticisms of courses currently on offer centred on assumptions that all subject specialists were facing the same kind of andragogical issues. These would undoubtedly increase if the methods continued to focus on an assumption of face to face contact and continuous study and if, distance learning and credit accumulation systems become more integral to higher learning.

The point being, that the legitimisation of staff development will only be widely accepted when a system is created that not only takes into account **and utilises** current complexity but also creates an open system of learning for staff, as institutional forms and academic enquiry

changes. All of which is easier to describe than to achieve. The evidence from the research in the North-East region and from the literature referred to above, suggests that there are a number of key issues that could be more systematically tackled in groping towards an effective policy and practice. The overall purpose being to arrive at an effective staff development policy which strives to serve professional and corporate interests with the participants owning the learning opportunities presented.

This is not to ignore the conflicting interests which are manifested in universities and certainly not to assume that consensus within the context of a negotiated order is easy to achieve. It is, however, based on the assumption that once the policy is clearer, the mechanisms for its implementation also become more amenable to analysis and practice. An opportunity is being taken here to speculate on what the components might be. It is proposed to explore these in two interrelated ways:-

principles of practice.

practice that reflects principles.

### **Principles of Practice.**

It would appear that the most basic issues which need to be addressed in defining and establishing a policy based on certain principles, all of which are interactive, appear to be as follows:-

1. The relationship between voluntary and mandatory systems.
2. The minimum as distinct from desirable requirements.
3. Corporate as distinct from professional interests.
4. Individual as distinct from collective development.

Greater clarity about these issues might then lead to a policy and practice that staff, including senior staff at all levels could own and to which they would feel some responsibility. To illustrate the significance of these issues they are briefly discussed below:-

## **1. The Relationship Between Voluntary and Mandatory Systems.**

### **a) Mandatory Elements:**

The urge to reduce individual discretion and departmental autonomy has led to the introduction of mandatory teacher training in many universities as well as some elements of conditional involvement for appraisal duties. For a variety of reasons, the most prominent of which is the enhancement of motivation, these have been designed as award-bearing courses. There is some doubt about whether motivation is enhanced by this method and the connection between award and mandatory policy, results in the latter being negatively impacted by the former. This is most notable in the length and content of courses which appear to have more to do with credentialist requirements, than to the immediate needs of the participants.

On the other hand, this is not an argument for the removal of mandatory elements, far from it, but to suggest that there is a case for mandatory elements for all staff, academics at all levels as well as other categories of staff. The Investor in People Award schemes offer a framework for this in terms of minimum time allocations but only if the lack of prescription about content, results in clear and consistent content policies for the institution.

An example of how this could work is that certain corporate interests are met through managerial requirements which are clearly articulated. For example, all staff must know policy in regard to equal opportunities; those responsible for the selection of students or staff must

know how this applies to fair recruitment. All staff must know health and safety at work policy. All teaching staff must know how to use particular defined skills to facilitate learning in large and small groups relevant to their subject setting. All should have been observed in their practice by skilled and supportive people who themselves have been trained in the skills of educative feedback.

All appraisers must know how to appraise and how to contribute to policy development in this area. etc. etc. Major institutional change such as the development of distance-learning or the increased use of part-time modes would automatically lead to skill updating. Individual change, such as promotion to positions of the management of resources, would automatically lead to assessment of developmental needs.

The point being that there is a need to determine which aspects of development can be left to individual discretion and those which cannot on the grounds of corporate accountability. The assumption being that all staff, at all levels, would be involved in some elements of mandatory staff development. The articulation of mandatory requirements for all staff irrespective of status or function, for example in regard to equal opportunities policy; supplemented by mandatory requirements for staff with particular functions, difficult though it might be to achieve, would emphasise those elements that cannot be left to chance.

**Principle 1.** Mandatory elements for all staff focused on defined corporate interests.

**b) Voluntary Elements:**

At the moment a lot of staff development participation is voluntary and is not systematically credited. Furthermore, some elements such as attending conferences and external learning

situations are if credited at all, done so professionally within the department not institutionally. This means that the individual nor the department are recognised for the investment they make and it serves to conceal the amount of overall investment in development that is being engaged. There is a need therefore, to find ways for these to be monitored and credited, both individually and in terms of departmental profiles. These could feature in quality assessment procedures, costing developmental investment and which would be most effective if clearly designated as the utilisation of resources. The need to credit and monitor voluntary participation in centrally organised staff development would appear to depend on effective recording systems of involvement. This does not at the moment appear to be the case which means participation cannot be used for departmental or individual profiling systems.

**Principle 2.** Monitoring and crediting all participation in voluntary staff development, including integral, subject-based work.

## **2. Minimum and Desirable Requirements.**

The research referred to above highlighted a dichotomy between the mandatory, certificated courses and those based on voluntary involvement. The former, relatively lengthy involving face to face attendance and additional written requirements, the latter being time limited of half a day to two days in duration. The certificated courses were the ones that attracted the most negative comments particularly about "packing and repetition" and one wonders if the need to establish the credentials of an award bearing course dominated the assessment of need. This is particularly important if it marginalises the practical constraints of the individuals concerned. The inputs which attracted most praise were those which focused on the fears and practical problems, often as they arose, rather than in anticipation of staff dealing with unfamiliar situations.

None of the shorter, voluntarily attended courses attracted criticism of this nature. Of course one could argue that the climate of compulsion would tend to generate negativity but one should not ignore the empowerment opportunities that compulsion can foster. Nor is one necessarily arguing against award bearing courses/programmes, if however, the concern with awards serves to marginalise the pressures on staff elsewhere, the question of effective learning comes more to the fore.

It is evident that the voluntary programmes do work on the concept of the minimum as distinct from the desirable time commitments. Given the pressures that academics and other staff encounter, which are likely to increase rather than diminish, a commitment to minimum intervention may gain greater legitimation than currently seems to be the case.

**Principle 3.** Commitment to define minimum staff development needs and to avoid unnecessary credentialism.

### **3. Corporate and Professional Interests.**

The major, barely concealed agenda confronting centralised staff development, centres on the degree to which corporate and professional interests are compatible in regard to the way staff are prepared for the variety of roles they are expected to fulfil. It has been suggested above that staff development officers are "piggy in the middle" of these two dominant interests, with many claiming that part of the lack of legitimation for their role is because of a too close an identification with corporate interests as compared with professional concerns.

The result is that participants of programmes are caught up in this conflict, often when they are most vulnerable. A major part of this problem stems from the fact that too little attention is paid to the legitimate concerns of staff whose *raison d'être* is their subject expertise and how these interact with the minimum corporate requirements of the institution. Some of this tension as far as staff development is concerned could be lessened by greater clarity in some of the issues discussed above.

This would particularly apply to acknowledgement and accreditation of integral staff development around subject based learning, a clear articulation of minimum, mandatory staff development for all staff in the interests of corporate survival and reputation; acknowledgement of differing androgogical contexts, an efficient use of time and an effective monitoring and recording system.

Most critically, the involvement of senior subject specialists in the determination of minimum staff development policy appears essential instead of what appears to be the case, of policy being defined at the centre and then "sold" to departments through the status or otherwise of the officers appointed for its dissemination. This is not to deny the effectiveness of the relationships that staff development officers forge with departmental seniors, simply to suggest that it needs to be more systemic and less bounded by personality and status considerations.

**Principle 4.** Acknowledgement of the value and inter-dependence of professional and corporate interests and the crediting of the integral staff development elements of professional activity.

#### **4. Individual and Collective Development.**

A case has been made for minimum mandatory involvement in staff development for all staff centred on issues that can be seen to have relevance to the collectivity of staff or specific categories of staff. This, by definition is irrespective of how individuals define their needs and is conducted with clear corporate interests in mind. Part of the negative feedback from academic staff referred to above however, is the lack of analysis given to their individual needs. This, for obvious reasons was most frequently related to the mandatory teacher training courses. Here the "being done to" and what can be described as the application of empty bottle theory, coloured the descriptions.

It needs to be borne in mind that many of these courses had been mounted quickly, with incomplete systems for informing staff of their obligations and often working with unpredictable numbers and with heterogeneous subject areas. The difficulty of mounting courses in these circumstances cannot be under-estimated. If however, the analysis of individual need was the focus of the early interventions by staff development officers, it might be that one could arrive at a less tidy but nevertheless more effective and engaging process. All the newly appointed staff interviewed in the North East region on mandatory, certificated programmes had started and some had completed courses, before their first appraisal had taken place. This seems to be putting the cart before the horse, although one is not under estimating the problems of timing or the fact that at the moment there is no automatic connection between appraisal systems and central staff development provision.

It would appear to be the case that some kind of appraisal of knowledge and skills and development needs should take place very early, in order that the individual recognises the

need and is directed to the most appropriate help. Of course, this doesn't make sense if one is working on the assumption that all staff within a particular category have similar, if not identical needs. The reactions of many staff during the interviews described above suggests that they feel they have very different needs and those that are shared with other employees, could be undertaken with shorter inputs or by different methods other than attendance at predictable times.

This is not the only example where the individual and the collective interact and not always in positive forms. If staff development programmes work from the concept of ownership, a clearer articulation of the individuals' need is more likely to foster ownership than by top-down definitions. This is not to argue for an extension of voluntarism but more an extension of what is implied in the utilisation of appraisal, with the practice of staff development.

Clearly though there will be times when in addition to institution wide staff development and individualised programmes, there will be needs that might be department wide - say, in the delivery of departmental services in radically different forms that override the interests of the individual. A clearer articulation of these varying levels and where the focus of building out from individual need is more important, would seem more likely to generate ownership than currently appears to be the case. Of course none of the above can be effective without a clear sense of ownership by institutional managers, a subject to which we will return.

**Principle 4.** In addition to minimal mandatory participation, all other staff development should work from the needs of the individual, except where departmental or wider corporate interests suggest otherwise.

It would seem therefore that staff development policies need to be based on principles which reflect clarity in the relationship between mandatory and voluntary participation; connection with appraisal systems; which work on the basis of minimum intervention; which credits integral, subject based learning; which clarifies the corporate interests and those of subject specialists and which works as much as possible from defined individual need rather from assumed collective need.

### **Practice That Reflects Principles.**

The underlying principle of all the above is that one should be building out from the individual but with a recognition that practice cannot be confined to individuals. The individual works in structures, systems and performs roles and staff development policy has to reflect these various dimensions.

To illustrate this point whilst at the same time holding on to the individual as the ultimate focus, the discussion will explore the following:-

Managerial ownership.

The institutional position of staff development personnel.

Staff development within a national framework.

Developmental programmes.

Monitoring and costing.

Development and reward systems

## **1. Managerial Ownership.**

Many writers have commented on the need for support at a very senior level and in at least one publication this has been defined as ownership. During the above research the significance of senior staff in the legitimisation of staff development was emphasised from a number of sources. Ownership however, can be demonstrated in a number of ways and some of these were described during the interviews. They appeared to take the form of direct support for staff development officers through the allocation of resources or attending introductory sessions for the newly recruited to demonstrate support.

If however, ownership also took the form of involvement by senior management in defined programmes of staff development as a participant as distinct from a flag waver, it might send out the kind of powerful signals needed to reluctant heads of department and others. The transformational leadership referred to above, might include awareness that the management and organisation of complex structures such as universities, at a time of rapid change, requires the ability to constantly update and to create the kind of non defensive climate where this is seen as positive not a measure of inadequacy. Furthermore, ensuring that such involvement carries a high profile, would in itself help to reinforce the idea of continuous development.

## **2. The Institutional Position of Staff Development Personnel.**

The debate about the institutional position of staff development personnel centres predominantly on their status as a means of fostering the idea of employer-led development. As stated earlier this takes the form of arguing for separate units, departments, a research and scholarship role, a recognised qualification and so on. A lot of the reasoning behind the interest

in separate structures is because of the perceived low status of personnel departments, which few with any knowledge of the fine or not so fine distinctions in universities, would question. -

The problem with separate units/departments is that it only marginally solves the status problems and does not take into account the possible transformation of personnel functions. As casualisation takes firmer hold the concept of personnel functions in universities may be redefined. In many industrial and commercial settings, this has already taken place, with people who used to be called personnel officers or industrial relations officers, now reincarnated as human resource managers with a more developmental and less legalistic mandate. If this happens in universities, the idea of separate staff development units may seem less logical than they do today.

The major problem that could be seen in the current institutional location, whether it be in personnel departments or in separate units, is the gulf between development staff and the staff they are keen to develop. Reducing the gap appears to be a major tool for the furtherance of a more "alongside - bottom up" approach to development. The danger for all those interested in creating a climate for reflective practice is that "our own" distance from practice can deskill and make it harder to work from a bottom up approach. Several of the policy documents referred to above particularly those emanating from the CVCP staff development agency in Sheffield comment on the need for partnership within institutions. Creating a cadre of staff development officers centrally located, with no departmental connection other than as a provider of service, may not be the best way forward. This is not to argue for the enormous task of staff development to be left to committees of interested parties, as appears to have been the case in many universities until recently. Staff development needs expertise but whether all the work needs to be done by them is another question.

It may be the case that a closer relationship with senior academic staff of the status of dean also working with designated departmental seniors with development responsibilities for the staff of a particular department might be more fruitful. Whether a closer, formal linkage with deans and designated departmental seniors would facilitate closer contact with individuals and increase legitimacy is of course open to question. The point being, that creating yet another specialism with its own establishment may be fighting today's battles with yesterday's tools.

### **3. Staff Development - a national framework**

At the moment there is considerable variation in the way staff development is defined and enacted within universities and this makes some sense given the varying histories and priorities. It is probably the case that there will never be an identical system of staff development from one university to another. There might be however, a form of accreditation of staff development programmes that permit transferability of achievement.

As important, if not more so is the need to ensure that a national presence is maintained which ensures that best practice is disseminated, that staff development officers are supported and that fosters a high profile presence with resource providers. It would be hard to over state the contributions made by the varying manifestations of CVCP sponsored organisations during the last 20 years from the Co-ordinating Committee for the Training of University Teachers in the 1970s, to the current Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency. The quality of the research and the publications is testament to the close understanding various officers have had and still have with each of the universities.

At no time in their history however, have they enjoyed secure funding or adequate resources. The current situation of the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency with its time limited funding, contract staff and income generation responsibilities is ludicrous. Although in the current climate one would be hard put to justify the establishment of something along the lines of the Council for Education and Training in Social Work, the case presented by Elton (1995) however, for a closer and permanent association with quality auditing would not only lend weight but makes sense, in seeing staff development as central to quality performance.

It would also lend weight to consideration of the development needs of people appointed to staff development posts in universities and what kind of continuing education makes sense for them. The human resource occupation, if one can define such a term, is at the moment redefining its role and that of those who work in this field. Universities although distinguishable in the complexity of their organisational form, would be unwise to plough their own furrow in human resource management terms until more clarity emerges. A great deal of the current thinking about human resource management, particularly around participation in decision making, has a long history in universities and the post Jarratt managerialism has not eliminated it completely.

#### **4. Staff Development Programmes.**

Appraisal: Any staff development programme which connects with the felt needs of participants would seem to be essentially locked into appraisal systems. There is evidence that there are major weaknesses with the appraisal systems currently in operation. This is partly

because of the way they were introduced, in particular the idea that they could form the basis for performance related pay systems. In order to avoid this kind of (possibly) spurious distinction, it seems that for many, the appraisal itself has been neutered of meaning. This is not purely because some people do it very badly but because it is not locked into a development system based on professional trust.

This is not to argue that appraisal should be confined only to developmental issues, it has also to be about assessment and may be one of the preliminary components in an early warning system for non performance. On the other hand, apart from the fact that some universities are asking (requiring?) feedback from appraisees about developmental needs, the only connection which seems to apply across the board between appraisal and staff development, is when someone is in trouble.

Career long: A great deal of effort is currently expended on the newly recruited supplemented by the availability of short inputs for those who wish to participate. Starting from the assumption that staff development activity is continuous throughout ones career and that one is treading a pathway, the end of which is never reached, a different scenario might emerge. To some extent the Investor in People Award Scheme is based on this premise with the minimum annual participation requirement. The components of a career long approach to development would according to the research described above and many aspects of the literature, be comprehensively conceived to include integral as well as centrally facilitated development, flexible, focussed on felt need and credited.

## **5. Monitoring and Costing.**

The current method of monitoring staff development leaves something to be desired. First, the methods employed are extremely variable across institutions which must make the job of all concerned difficult in assessing the current scale of involvement. This is not the place to suggest the kind of methods that could be employed but they should connect with individuals and their career development and to departments in terms of skill auditing. Some kind of individual and collective profiling system which is continuous throughout the career would appear to be important not only for participants but for facilitators in the assessment of institutional need.

To some extent this might depend on a more adequate costing mechanism which currently varies from institution to institution. At the moment a lot of the costs are concealed because inherent staff development is not costed institutionally; a lot of the activity in centrally led programmes takes place in unsocial hours and few members of staff receive consistent remission from their normal work when participating in staff development programmes. If all of these were adequately costed and in a way which allowed some cross institutional comparison, it might at a stroke, raise the profile of the activity.

## **6. Reward Systems.**

At the moment reward systems are unpredictable and subject to considerable institutional idiosyncrasy. It may be the case that this is inevitable but when applied to staff development programmes it makes very little sense. This is not because of the standard cry to reward teaching achievement as well as research, there are dilemmas about that which will not be

explored in this paper. It does make sense that the attempts by staff to build and reinforce their knowledge and skills should be noted and taken into account in reward systems. At the very least all appraisals should record the efforts of staff in this regard and also when staff do not appear to avail themselves of opportunities. Some of the responses of senior staff to the involvement of staff in development programmes, if true, are unforgivable and systems should be able to marginalise those who undermine staff in their pursuit of good practice.

At the same time one cannot dismiss all of the apparently negative responses to bloody minded self-interest. There is a need for universities as the pinnacle of higher learning in the society, to be more involved with the major issues of the day particularly in contributing to rational argument and decision-making in ways which credit complexity. A good case can be made that the criticisms of higher education in the 1980s, even if stated too starkly and in ways that oversimplified issues, had validity. British higher education was elitist and in the 1990s, in important respects is becoming less so; it was insufficiently accountable to the taxpayer, and is now more so and in the area of staff development, more and more staff are not subject to the whims of their departmental seniors no matter what the interests of the State are in fostering its establishment.

What appears to be needed is a greater recognition of the tensions and contradictions between professional education centred on the subject and that which is focused on institutional concerns. To add to the complications is that intellectual enquiry that knows no national boundaries is increasingly supported by technology which allows for rapid dissemination and communication with all the ramifications this has for the way professional reference groups interact. At the same time there are the legitimate concerns of a society demanding accountability and some control in the process and the outcome of the way professional and

institutional requirements are facilitated. These tensions and contradictions need to be viewed, not in pathological terms but as part of the internal logic of what the university represents. It highlights the significance of the negotiated order and the means in which the negotiations take place.

The dilemma rests in how these interests can be balanced. If it is under - controlled it is likely that the donnish dominion will reign. Past experience suggests that this means handing over control of policy and process to academics who are likely to operate within their own subject and career interests in many ways independent of the institutional and societal interests in which they operate. If the process of working out these negotiations leads to a system which is over - controlled, something valuable is lost. This is not only about creativity which is often stimulated by the freedom to range across ideas and discovery, independent of its immediate utility. It is the mark of a civilised society that it can accommodate institutions which have relevance to the economic interests of the state, but which also have the freedom to research and question independently. In a world becoming increasingly unpredictable, achieving this balance is essential. It is within this context that the daily efforts of staff development personnel in British universities need to be understood.

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### Institutional Phases of Staff Development.

#### Phase One: The Embryonic.

The provision of voluntary induction courses by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. Some support by Vice-Chancellors. Some senior staff address the newly appointed staff. No earmarked budget for staff development. Some workshops are organised for more experienced staff. No clearly defined policy or management group directly responsible for staff development.

#### Phase Two: The Established.

Staff development unit, service or centre is established. At least one staff development co-ordinator in post. The university has a policy on staff development, a staff development committee, an annual programme of events and an identifiable staff budget. A short course on teaching is provided for all newly appointed lecturers, courses and workshops on teaching are provided for more experienced staff and Heads of Department. The university policy and strategy of staff development meets the requirements of the 1987 CVCP Code of Practice on Academic Staff Training (CVCP, 1987; Brown and Atkins, 1986)

#### Phase Three: The Emergent.

The university recognises that staff development requires more than a voluntary course participation. An extended course for newly appointed staff is mandatory and it leads to a recognised award. There is some remission from teaching for newly appointed staff following the course. They are assisted in the course and in the department by a mentor who has received some training in mentorship. A wide range of short courses are available for all full-time and part-time members of the university concerned with teaching. Attendance at these courses is monitored by departments. Opportunities for more advanced study of university teaching and learning are available. Time is allocated for course development. There is a release scheme for staff who wish to work jointly on curriculum development projects with the staff development unit. There is a resource centre of teaching materials and equipment available to staff. Development and consultancy work is undertaken with individuals, course teams, departments, schools and faculties. Good practice in teaching and in teaching innovations are disseminated across the university through fora, symposia, newsletters and computer networks. The senior management is aware of good practices in departments and provides explicit support for innovations in teaching. Staff development policies and strategies are integrated with systems of course review and staff appraisal. The staff development unit is a cost centre. It has direct links with the senior management of the university. There are well defined pathways to promotion for teaching and curriculum expertise as well as for research. There are strong links between the university's policies for staff development and teaching, and between these policies and the university's mission and objectives. The university promotes ownership and responsibility for staff development in its departments and by its academic staff.

Source: Staff Development for Teaching and Learning. UK USDU Paper No 8 1994.

## Structures for the Provision of CPD

| Structure:  | Headed by:   | Responsible to:  | Locus:  |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1. (a) Educational Development Unit/Service. (For academic staff and supporting only teaching/learning.)<br>+<br>(b) Separate training/personnel function. (For allied staff ie all other than academic and related, and for professional development for all staff in areas other than teaching and learning.) | Director/Adviser/ Co-ordinator.<br><br>Assistant Personnel Officer (full or part-time) | Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic, Planning or Staffing).<br><br>Personnel Director                        | Independent central service (perhaps within learning resources centre).<br><br>Personnel Office |
| 2. (a) Centre for Academic Practice. (For academic and related staff in all aspects of their work and also for students and their learning support.)<br>+<br>(b) Separate training/personnel function. (For allied staff.)  | Director/Adviser/ Co-ordinator<br><br>Assistant Personnel Officer (full or part-time). | Pro-Vice-Chancellor<br><br>Personnel Director  | Independent central service<br><br>Personnel Office   |
| 3. (a) Enterprise Unit.<br>(For academic staff in aspects of teaching, learning and curriculum development.)<br>+<br>(b) Staff Development Centre/Unit/Service. (Which might be divided into two operations as in (i) and (2) above.)   | Director/Co-ordinator<br><br>Staff Dev. Officer/ Director/ Co-ordinator/Adviser        | Pro-Vice-Chancellor<br><br>Pro-Vice-Chancellor/ Chair of Staff Dev. Comm./Registrar/Personnel Director | Independent central service<br><br>Independent or Personnel Office                              |
| 4. (a) Any of the above models of separated staff development support.<br>+<br>(b) Quality Unit.<br>(To support (i) responses to quality audit and assessment, and (ii) quality enhancement   | (See above)<br><br>Director  | (See above)<br><br>Pro-Vice-Chancellor   | (See above)<br><br>PVC's office/central administration/independent                              |

Source: Continuing Professional Development for Staff in Higher Education UCoSDA 1994

Structures for the Provision of CPD (cont'd)

| Structure:  | Headed by:   | Responsible to:  | Locus:   |
|---|--|--|--|
| 5. (A) Lone academic staff developer (full/part-time).<br>Supporting either teaching and learning or all aspects of academic practice.)<br>+<br>(b) Lone allied staff developer (full/part-time).<br>Support all staff other than academic and related) [These two functions might be separated or loosely related eg share same secretary or more closely integrated.) | Officer/Co-ordinator/Adviser<br><br>Training Officer/Adviser | Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Registrar/Chair of Staff Dev. Committee<br><br>Registrar/Personnel Director/Academic Staff Developer | Central administration/ Education Faculty<br><br>Central administration/Personnel Office |
| 6. Lone Staff developer for all staff. (Full/part-time - supporting all activities and all staff.)  | Officer/Co-ordinator Manager/Adviser                         | PVC/Registrar/Director of Personnel  | Central administration/Personnel Office  |
| 7. (a) Either of the above two models (5) and 6).<br>+<br>(b) Lone quality support appointment. (For responses to quality audit/assessment.)  | (See above)<br><br>Officer/Manager                           | (See above)<br><br>Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Registrar   | (See above)<br><br>Central administration  |
| 8. Integrated staff development centre/unit/service. (For all staff.)   | Director/Officer/Co-ordinator                                | PVC/Registrar/Chair of Staff Dev. Comm./Director of Personnel.   | Independent/central administration/Personnel Office                                      |
| 9. Human resources development service (Integrating all personnel/staff dev. Functions).  | Director   | Registrar/Pro-Vice-Chancellor  | Central administration   |
| 10 (a) Either of the above two models (8) and (9).<br>+<br>(b) Quality unit/office/lone appointment.  | (See above) (8) and (9)<br><br>(See above) (4) and (7)       | (See above) (8) and (9)<br><br>(See above) (4) and (7)   | (See above) (8) and (9)<br><br>(See above) (4) and (7)                                   |

Source: Continuing Professional Development for Staff in Higher Education UCosDA 1994

Note: To staff of 4 Universities (condensed spacing)

**ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN BRITISH UNIVERSITIES.**

**SECTION 1.**

Please indicate.

**1.a** Your age.

- 20-25yrs
- 26-35yrs
- 36-45yrs
- 45yrs +

**1.b**

- Male    Female.

**1.c** Your academic subject (see list at the end of the questionnaire).

- HEFCE                  USCAS

**1.d** Your academic qualifications.

- Ph'd.
- MBA./MSc./ MA./M.Phil.
- B.Eng./B.Ed./B.A/B.Sc.
- Other.

If "other", please elaborate. \_\_\_\_\_

**1.e** Have you any professional qualifications? If so please specify,

\_\_\_\_\_

**1.f** Where did you complete your first higher education qualification? (college/university)

\_\_\_\_\_

**1.g** What is your current employing department? \_\_\_\_\_

**1.h** Are you employed on a fixed term contract?                  Yes    No

**1.i** How long have you worked in your current institution? -2yrs.

- 2 - 4yrs.
- 5 - 7yrs.
- 8 - 10yrs.
- 10yrs. +



2.c Has any of the training listed in 2.a and 2.b led to certification recognised by your employer?

Prior to current employment.            Y   N

Current employment.                    Y   N

2.d If "yes" did the fact that it was certificated influence your motivation to participate?

Y   N

If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

2.e If your answer to 2c was "no" would you have preferred the training to have carried an award?

Y   N

2.f Is your motivation to participate in training affected by whether it is undertaken by staff employed by your university as compared to independent training agencies?.

Y   N   Don't know

2.g Is there any specific type of training which you would prefer to be conducted by external, independent trainers?

Y   N

If so, please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 3.**

3.a Why have you undertaken staff development during your **current** employment?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.b During your current employment have you been under pressure from your employers to participate in in-house training which left to your own devices you would not necessarily undertake?

Y   N

If "yes", please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

3.c Are you aware of any terms and conditions of employment which require or expect staff to undertake in-house staff development training?

Y N

3.d If "yes" is it -a requirement?

Y N

-an expectation?

Y N

3.e In either case how was this information conveyed to you?

---

3.f Please describe any active help from your department which has enabled you participate in training.

3.g Please indicate any problems from which makes your involvement in training difficult.

3.h To your knowledge have any of your immediate seniors participated in in-house training during the past three years?

Yes No Don't know

3.i Has the response of **senior** staff to you undertaking in-house training been helpful to your involvement?

Very 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all

3.j If helpful, please describe how.

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3.k If unhelpful, please describe how. \_\_\_\_\_

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**3.l** Do you expect your involvement in in-house training to be taken into account in matters of:-

|                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Promotion?           | Y | N |
| Award of increments? | Y | N |

**3.m** Please elaborate on the reasons for your answers to questions B.l.

**3.n** If you leave your current employment do you expect to be credited with in-house training already undertaken?

Y    N    Don't know

**3.o** If so, is this via a systematic credit accumulation system?

Y    N    Don't know

#### **SECTION 4.**

**4.a** Has any of the in-house training you have undertaken been helpful to you in doing your job?. If so, please specify the type of training and how it helped.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

How it helped \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.b** In general has the training you have undertaken during your current employment met your expectations?

Y    N    Parts of it

**4.c** Was any aspect or type of training you experienced **particularly** useful, if so how?

Type of training: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Usefulness: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4.d** Could any of the training you have done have been improved, if so how?

Type of Training: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Improvements: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 5

**5.a** Are you part of a formal performance appraisal system?      Y      N

**5.b** If so, what is the frequency

annually?  
bi-annually +?  
other? (please specify)

**5.c** If the answer to 5.a is yes, has your involvement in in - house training noted and taken into account?

Y      N

**5.d** What percentage of your time is spent on:-

Teaching?  
Research?  
Administration?  
Course Dev'mt?  
Other?

5.e Please indicate the aspects of your work which make you feel most pressured.

| Low |   |   |   |   |  | High |
|-----|---|---|---|---|--|------|
| 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  | 6    |

- Teaching.
- Research.
- Administration.
- Course Dev'mt.
- Other.(please specify)

5.f Have any of the above pressures led to feelings of stress?. If so please specify.

5.g Has in-house staff development training a role in helping you with any of your work pressures?

| Little |   |   |   |   |  | A lot. |
|--------|---|---|---|---|--|--------|
| 1      | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  | 6      |

- Teaching?
- Research?
- Administration?
- Course Dev'mt?
- Other?

Please elaborate on any reference in the "other" section.

5.h Please feel free to comment ( using the reverse of this document if necessary) about your experience in in-house training as a part of staff development, that you think would be helpful to this research.

Section 6 overleaf.

## SECTION 6

Would you be willing to take part in a confidential interview of approximately one to one and a half hours duration?

Y N

If yes please state your name, department and contact telephone number and indicate if you are likely to be away for any length of time between now and Oct. 1994.(block capitals please)

Name\_\_\_\_\_Dept\_\_\_\_\_Tel.No\_\_\_\_\_

I am away during the following times between now and Oct. 1994:-

**In any event I would like to thank you for your time and consideration in the completion of this questionnaire and to ask that it be sealed in the enclosed envelope and returned to your staff development office where it will be passed un-opened to me.**

Note: To staff of 1 University (condensed spacing)

**ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN BRITISH UNIVERSITIES.**

**SECTION 1. Please indicate.**

**1.a Your age.**

- 20 -25yrs.
- 26-35yrs.
- 36-45yrs.
- 45yrs +.

**1.b**

Male    Female.

**1.c Your academic subject (see list at the end of the questionnaire).**

HEFCE    USCAS

**1.d Your academic qualifications.**

- Ph'd.
- MBA./MSc./ MA./M.Phil.
- B.Eng./B.Ed./B.A/B.Sc.
- Other.

If "other", please elaborate. \_\_\_\_\_

**1.e Have you any professional qualifications? If so please specify,**

\_\_\_\_\_

**1.f Where did you complete your first higher education qualification? (college/university)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**1.g What is your current employing department? \_\_\_\_\_**

**1.h Are you employed on a fixed term contract?**

Yes    No

**1.i How long have you worked in your current institution?**

- 2yrs.
- 2 - 4yrs.
- 5 - 7yrs.
- 8 - 10yrs.
- 10yrs. +

**1.j** Please list any **other** higher education institutions in which you have been employed.

Name

Approx.dates.

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**1.k** How would you describe your main academic orientation?

- Mainly teaching.
- Mainly research.
- Teaching/research.
- Other.

If "other", please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 2. GENERAL IN - HOUSE STAFF DEVELOPMENT.**

**This part of the questionnaire is focussed on any in - house training you have undertaken in addition to the Initial Training of University Teachers Course. Please do not include any information about the ITUT Course.**

**2.a** Please list your involvement in any **other** current or recent (last 3yrs) in-house staff development organised by your **present** employers.

| Type  | Duration.(approx.) |
|-------|--------------------|
| _____ | _____              |
| _____ | _____              |
| _____ | _____              |
| _____ | _____              |
| _____ | _____              |

**2.b** Please list any previous **higher education** staff development prior to your current employment?

Type

Approx.duration

Institution.

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**2.c** Has any of the training listed in 2.a and 2.b led to certification recognised by your employer?

Prior to current employment. Y N

Current employment. Y N

**2.d** If "yes" did the fact that it was certificated influence your motivation to participate?

Y N

If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

**2.e** If your answer to 2c was "no" would you have preferred the training to have carried an award?

Y N

**SECTION 3. ALL CURRENT IN - HOUSE TRAINING INCLUDING THE INITIAL TRAINING FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS COURSE.**

Please include opinions about the ITUT Course in this section.

**3.a** Why have you undertaken staff development during your **current** employment?

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**3.b** During your current employment have you been under pressure from your employers to participate in in-house training which left to your own devices you would not necessarily undertake?

Y N

If "yes", please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

**3.c** Are you aware of any terms and conditions of employment which require or expect staff to undertake in-house staff development training?

Y N

**3.d** If "yes" is it -a requirement?

Y N

-an expectation?

Y N

**3.e** In either case how was this information conveyed to you?

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**3.f** Please describe any active help from your department which has enabled you participate in training.

**3.g** Please indicate any problems from which makes your involvement in training difficult.

**3.h** To your knowledge have any of your immediate seniors participated in in-house training during the past three years?

Yes No Don't know

**3.i** Has the response of **senior** staff to you undertaking in-house training been helpful to your involvement?

Very 5      4      3      2      1 Not at all

**3.j** If helpful, please describe how.

**3.k** If unhelpful, please describe how.



**4.b** What in your opinion are the strengths of the ITUT Course? In this and the next question please distinguish between content and method.

Content: \_\_\_\_\_

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Methods and resources \_\_\_\_\_

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**4.c** Could the course be improved, if so, how?

Content. \_\_\_\_\_

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Methods and resources: \_\_\_\_\_

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**4.d** Has any of the **other** in-house training you have undertaken been helpful to you in doing your job?. If so, please specify the type of training and how it helped.

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

How it helped \_\_\_\_\_

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**4.e** In general has the training you have undertaken during your current employment met your expectations?

Y   N   Parts of it

**4.f** Could any of the **other** training apart from the ITUT Course you have done have been improved, if so how?

Type of Training: \_\_\_\_\_

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Improvements: \_\_\_\_\_

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**4.g** Is your motivation to participate in training affected by whether it is undertaken by staff employed by your university as compared to independent training agencies?.

Y   N   Don't know

**4.h** Is there any specific type of training which you would prefer to be conducted by external, independent trainers?

Y   N

If so, please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

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If so please indicate general reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

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**SECTION 5**

**5.a** Are you part of a formal performance appraisal system?      Y    N

**5.b** If so, what is the frequency

annually?  
bi-annually +?  
other? (please specify)

**5.c** If the answer to 5.a is yes, has your involvement in in - house training noted and taken into account?

Y    N

**5.d** What percentage of your time is spent on:-      %

Teaching?  
Research?  
Administration?  
Course Dev'mt?  
Other?

**5.e** Please indicate the aspects of your work which make you feel most pressured.

| Low |   |   |   |   |  | High |
|-----|---|---|---|---|--|------|
| 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  | 6    |

Teaching.  
Research.  
Administration.  
Course Dev'met.  
Other.(please specify)

**5.f** Have any of the above pressures led to feelings of stress?. If so please specify.

5.g Has in-house staff development training a role in helping you with any of your work pressures?

|        |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Little |   |   |   |   |   | A lot. |
| 1      | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |        |

Teaching?  
Research?  
Administration?  
Course Dev'mt?  
Other?

Please elaborate on any reference in the "other" section.

5.h Please feel free to comment ( using the reverse of this document if necessary) about your experience in in-house training as a part of staff development, that you think would be helpful to this research.

## SECTION 6

Would you be willing to take part in a confidential interview of approximately one to one and a half hours duration?

Y N

If yes please state your name, department and contact telephone number and indicate if you are likely to be away for any length of time between now and Oct. 1994.(block capitals please)

Name\_\_\_\_\_Dept\_\_\_\_\_Tel.No\_\_\_\_\_

I am away during the following times between now and the end of Oct. 1994:-

From\_\_\_\_\_To\_\_\_\_\_

From\_\_\_\_\_To\_\_\_\_\_

From\_\_\_\_\_To\_\_\_\_\_

**In any event I would like to thank you for your time and consideration in the completion of this questionnaire and to ask that it be sealed in the enclosed envelope and returned to your staff development office where it will be passed un-opened to me.**

Note: Attached to all questionnaires

### Table of Academic Subject Categories

| <u>HEFCE Funding Category</u><br>ASC Name         | <u>USCAS Subject Groups</u>  |
|---|--|
| 1. Clinical and Pre-Clinical Subjects *           | A (Medicine and Dentistry)<br>D1 (Veterinary Science)  |
| 2. Subjects and Professions<br>Allied to Medicine | B (Subjects Allied to Medicine)<br>L5 (Applied Social Work)  |
| 3. Science  | F (Physical Sciences)<br>C (Biological Sciences)<br>D (Agriculture and related subjects)<br>excluding D1, Veterinary Science |
| 4. Engineering and Technology                     | HJ (Engineering and Technology)  |
| 5. Built Environment                              | K (Architecture, Building and Planning,<br>Environmental Technologies)   |
| 6. Mathematical Sciences, IT<br>and Computing     | G (Mathematical Sciences)<br>N2 (Operational Research)<br>P2 (Information Science)   |
| 7. Business and Management                        | N (Business and Administrative Studies)<br>excluding N2, Operational Research  |
| 8. Social Sciences                                | LM (Social Studies including Economics,<br>Sociology, Politics, Law)<br>excluding L5, Applied Social Work                    |
| 9. Humanities                                     | QRT (Languages and related disciplines)<br>V (Humanities)<br>P (Mass Communication and<br>Documentation)                     |
| 10. Art, Design and Performing Arts               | W (Creative Arts)  |
| 11. Education *                                   | X (Education including ITT)  |

\* split into sub-categories

Source: HEFCE Circular 9

Note: Letter to senior staff development officers after first meeting

Dear

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH - IN - SERVICE TRAINING.**

Thank you so much for seeing me about the research, it was most helpful not only in confirming my interest in staff development but in also pointing out some interesting lines of enquiry. My preliminary contacts are now complete and I wonder if I can trouble you further:-

a) to cast your eye over the enclosed draft of the questionnaire and comment on its adequacy or otherwise. Obviously when it's desk topped it will look more professional but in addition to any comments about style and content of the questions comments on the space for answers would be welcome.

b) also to help me to establish a contact list which is anonymous to me and help with the distribution.

After your views on the questionnaire the major assistance needed is in 'selecting' 50 staff currently or very recently involved in in - service training. Ideally, they should be drawn from as many departments as possible and hopefully include a gender balance proportionate to their representation in training.

I could deliver the questionnaires sealed in blank envelopes including a self addressed envelope c/o your office. If it were then possible for you to arrange them to be addressed and sent via internal mail this would protect the anonymity and eliminate the need for postage. If this works I want to interview a sample of the respondents and after the initial distribution would take all responsibility for contacting them.

Is this an awful burden, if so have you any suggestions about how I can proceed? If you could let me have your response to the questionnaire and the proposed next steps by the end of March 1994 it would be really helpful. I hope, if all goes well, to have the questionnaires sent out for the start of the summer term and to seek responses by the end of May 1994.

Looking forward to hearing from you

Yours

Muriel Sawbridge.

Note: Letter to staff development officers after  
consultation re: marking/distribution system

Dear

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH - IN - HOUSE TRAINING.**

Thank you so much for all the helpful comments on the draft questionnaire and agreeing to select the participants and distributing the material to them. I have tried to incorporate all the suggestions and was only really stumped by the one that suggested it be shortened! Unfortunately there isn't time to seek your opinion on the final draft and I hope you feel that it is an improvement.

Because of requests from some of the institutions for some early informal feedback I have asked for the return of the questionnaires to you **by the 20th. of May**. If it were possible for the envelopes to be addressed and posted by your internal mail **by the 22nd of April** I think this would be a fair request. If there are insurmountable problems in distribution could you let me know as soon as possible.

In working out the distribution will you try to ensure that, they are drawn from as many departments as possible and that the gender balance proportionate to their representation in training. I will contact you on the 23rd of May to arrange collection of the responses - fingers crossed that most will find it sufficiently interesting and have the time to participate.

I am grateful to you for the support and willingness to be involved, it has been a rewarding experience and an education in itself to have been in contact with people responsible for the development of training.

Yours

Muriel Sawbridge.

Note: Accompanying letter to staff of 4 Universities

Dear Colleague,

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE - IN - HOUSE TRAINING.**

Attached is a questionnaire which is part of a research project about academic staff development in British Universities. A number of staff either currently or recently involved in in - house training organised by their employers, drawn from the five universities in the north - east region are being asked to complete the questionnaire. It is then intended to conduct a sample number of individual interviews drawn from those respondents who express a willingness to be interviewed.

The research will inform the debate about the range, content and conditions for academic staff development via in - service training and to assist in promoting good practice. As far as I am aware this is the only on-going research where the opinions of academic staff across a range of higher education institutions is being canvassed.

The questionnaire and any subsequent interview is entirely confidential to me and will not be used to identify any individual or department or particular university in any of those involved. The research is being carried out with the support of your staff development personnel who are assisting in the distribution of the questionnaires and the processes to protect confidentiality.

As an academic of some 20yrs experience I am only too aware of the pressures on academic staff time at the moment but it would greatly assist the research if you could find time (approximately 30 minutes) to complete the questionnaire, return it sealed in the attached envelope to your staff development section from which it will be collected un-opened. Time is of the essence and I would be most grateful if you could do so **by Friday May the 20th.**

Yours

Muriel Sawbridge

**Please note: There are two important clarifications necessary. The first in regard to the type of training under consideration and the second on how and by whom it is organised. The terms in-house training and staff development are used throughout the questionnaire. As you can appreciate this can mean a wide spectrum of activities. For the purpose of this research the terms embrace the courses, seminars, workshops and accreditation of prior experience programmes geared to how we teach, manage resources, devise courses, understand institutional policies, secure resources for teaching and research and utilise technology to maximise efficiency.**

**It does not attempt to include the numerous ways that academics keep abreast of their academic subject area.**

**The second important proviso is that the research is seeking information from participants of employer organised training modes, so this would not include the attendance of conferences or workshops organised by other organisations unless it was part of a registered, structured pattern of training via in - house training advisors and managers. If there is any doubt please do not hesitate to contact me.**

Note: Accompanying letter to staff of one university

Dear Colleague,

**STAFF DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE - IN - HOUSE TRAINING. - INITIAL TRAINING OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS**

Attached is a questionnaire which is part of a research project about staff development in British Universities. A number of staff either currently or recently involved in in - house training, drawn from the five universities in the north - east region are being asked to complete the questionnaire. It is then intended to conduct a sample number of individual interviews drawn from those respondents who express a willingness to be interviewed.

It is hoped that the research will inform the debate about the range, content and conditions for academic staff development via in - house training and to assist in promoting good practice. As far as I am aware this is the only on-going research where the opinions of academic staff across a range of higher education institutions is being canvassed.

The questionnaire seeks general information about you and your experience in and opinions of in - house training but also includes important sections on the Initial Training of University Teachers course.

The questionnaire and any subsequent interview is entirely confidential to me and will not be used to identify any individual in any of the universities approached. The research is being carried out with the support of your staff development personnel who are assisting in the distribution of the questionnaires and the processes to protect confidentiality.

As an academic with 20yrs experience I am only too aware of the pressures on academic staff time at the moment but it would greatly assist the research if you could find time (approx. 30 minutes) to complete the questionnaire, return it sealed in the attached envelope to your staff development section from which it will be collected un-opened. Time is of the essence and I would be most grateful if you could do so **by Friday May the 20th.**

Yours

Muriel Sawbridge

**Please note:** There are two important clarifications necessary. The first in regard to the type of training under consideration and the second on how and by whom it is organised. The terms in-house training and staff development are used throughout the questionnaire. As you can appreciate this can mean a wide spectrum of activities. For the purpose of this research the terms embrace the courses, seminars, workshops and accreditation of prior experience programmes geared to how we teach, manage resources, devise courses, understand institutional policies, secure resources for teaching and research and utilise technology to maximise efficiency. It does not attempt to include the numerous ways that academics keep abreast of their academic subject area.

The second important proviso is that the research is seeking information from participants of employer organised training modes, so this does not include the attendance at conferences or workshops organised by other organisations unless it is part of a registered, structured pattern of training via in-house training advisers and managers. If there is any doubt please do not hesitate to contact me.

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.

## 1. Introduction.

To include thanks for seeing me and general contact making.

## 2. Questionnaire Issues.

These are issues that were either not clear from the questionnaire or which would benefit from further elaboration. Questions were, wherever possible couched in the language of the questionnaire replies. This part of the interview served a number of functions, to remind the interviewee of the research and some of her or his responses, to demonstrate that the questionnaires had been read and taken seriously, to secure additional information and to engage in communication in preparation for the rest of the interview.

3. Employment Changes - institutional ?  
- subject area ?4. Career Priorities - what they are ?  
- who defines ?  
- any conflicts ?  
- how achievement is measured ?5. Perceptions of the Future - personally / professionally ?  
- institutional / subject loyalty ?6. Experience and Opinion of Corporate Training - experience/s ?  
- outcomes ?  
- institutional support ?  
- appraisal ?  
- award bearing training ?  
- mandatory systems ?  
- communication re. above ?  
- evaluation systems ?

## 7. Connection Between Work Pressure and Training.

This part of the interview utilized the questionnaire responses a) to seek elaboration of the work pressures particularly those which were indicative of stress levels, b) the interviewees knowledge of the role of training in areas which indicated high pressure but low opinion of the role of training and c) the degree to which training relieved or developed coping skills in regard to work pressure.

Close of Interview.

