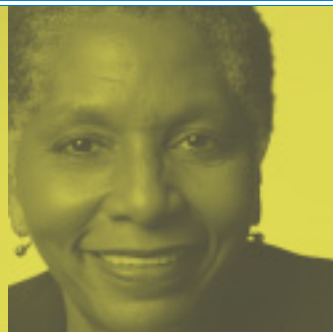


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# Funding Innovation and Disseminating New Teaching Practices

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– a guide to good practice

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# Executive summary

1. Innovation in learning and teaching is a key priority of the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF). HEFCE 99/48 states five strategic priorities that are continued in HEFCE 02/24. One of these concerns innovation:

**“Research and innovation.** We will build on the substantial innovation in learning and teaching already taking place in UK higher education, and identify other areas where investment in research and development can best contribute to the learning experience of students. We need to continue to support the development of innovative learning and teaching methods to maintain a leading edge in higher education worldwide.”

Two other strategic priorities of the HEFCE are also directly relevant to the way innovation is funded and supported within institutions: “Building capacity for change” and “Disseminating and embedding good practice”.

2. The proportion of Higher Education institutions funding innovation as part of their learning and teaching strategy increased from nine percent in 1998 to forty-nine percent in 2000 and has almost certainly continued this rapid rise since (HEFCE, 2001). These figures probably underestimate the proportion of institutions that allocate funds to improve teaching through ‘projects’ of one kind or another. TQEF funding is often devolved to faculties or departments who then fund projects without formal or public bidding processes (such as at Liverpool John Moores University). In some institutions, such as the University of Central England, almost all TQEF funding is used to fund innovation projects.

3. This guide to good practice describes the ways in which institutions are:

- funding innovation in teaching through project initiatives of a variety of kinds
- taking steps to disseminate the outcomes of projects and spread them across the institution so that they become embedded
- evaluating the outcomes of funded projects
- taking steps to maximise the cost-effectiveness of investment in innovation.

4. Funding of innovation projects started in the late 1970s at institutions such as the former Brighton Polytechnic, and has evolved over an extended period as institutions have learnt how to get more out of their investment. Developments have included:

- clearer specification of what the innovation fund is for, with clear criteria including, for example, the potential for benefit across the institution of the innovation rather than only to the bidder or the bidder's department
- funding for those innovations that are clearly targeted on institutional priorities, specified in their mission or learning and teaching strategy, rather than on any kind of innovation an enthusiastic teacher might wish to engage in
- regular annual rounds of funding from a stable long term fund that are widely advertised, so that all teachers know about the nature of the opportunity and the schedule for bidding, and have probably been associated with one or more such projects over the years
- much more competition for funds which allows tougher conditions to be placed on bidders and which allows the institution to target funding on institutional, rather than personal, priorities
- larger funds supporting more and larger projects
- several parallel funds targeting different priorities
- encouragement or additional funding for collaboration across departmental boundaries within projects, so that projects focus on teaching and learning processes that have wide applicability and are not too narrowly focussed or content-oriented

- bringing together projects focussing on one strand of the learning and teaching strategy, in cross-institutional groups with an institution-wide brief that goes beyond their individual local concerns, so that projects learn from each other that the overall impact is more than that of the sum of the parts
- the targeting of all funding on a single priority for that year (such as cost-effective assessment) to enable the whole institution to move forward in relation to that theme
- more support for projects, usually from an educational development unit, for project management and educational issues
- involvement of senior management, (such as a 'Pro Vice Chancellor, Teaching') to champion the initiative and also to identify where the blocks to innovation require central management intervention in order to be overcome
- greater demand for projects to build on what has gone before, in terms of both practice and literature, so that projects do not re-invent wheels
- greater emphasis on evaluation, sometimes involving the 'lending' of research assistant time from a central unit, with requirements for scholarly as well as practical outcomes from projects
- personal benefits to those awarded project funding, such as the award of the title 'Teaching Fellow'; increased pay; provision of administrative or technical support, or significant remission of other duties. This recognises the contribution the individual is making and encourages teachers to engage with significant innovation
- deliberate effort to increase the capacity of teachers to bring about change, for example by including small-scale 'action research' projects during initial training. This feeds in to the quality of design, and likelihood of success, of innovation projects.

5. Funding innovation projects in some institutions where innovation in teaching is not well established, and where a research culture is dominant, can involve few of the features listed in paragraph four above and may take a similar form to the funding of research, embodying the following features:

- funds are likely to support 'high quality' bids, whatever they are about, rather than to reflect management or institutional priorities. Bids may not even need departmental support
- funding per project may be substantial, in order to increase status and credibility alongside larger external research grants, but may result in few projects being funded
- the funding is often used to hire postgraduate research assistants to undertake the work, rather than it being undertaken by lecturers themselves, so as to protect lecturers' research time
- projects may operate in relative isolation from each other with little sense of co-ordinated institutional commitment. The work may be perceived as a private individual project, as with research, rather than as a public institutional project
- there may be more emphasis on pedagogic research projects and the scholarship of teaching, and on scholarly conceptual and empirical outputs, (such as seminars and published papers reporting what has been learnt, in relation to literature on learning and teaching) rather than training workshops and good practice guides
- there may be final reporting of the kind associated with Research Council funded projects, for accountability purposes, but little emphasis on dissemination. Indeed there may be an assumption that colleagues with different interests may be unlikely to benefit from the findings or that dissemination, if it occurs, takes place through existing journals or conferences, as with research, for anyone who happens to be interested, as is the case with research.

Some institutions have combined reward for excellent teaching and project funding initiatives in a way that resembles the National Teaching Fellows Scheme (NTFS). Awards are made on the basis of documented teaching excellence (or commitment to implementing the institutional learning and teaching strategy) but the funds awarded are then used to support a teaching project. For example the University of Gloucester scheme almost exactly mirrors the NTFS, though with much more modest

funding. One of those receiving an award is then nominated for the national scheme. Some institutions have both a 'Teaching Award Scheme' which contains a project component and parallel project funding initiatives. The extent to which the award of funds acts as a reward for, or recognition of, excellence and is a sufficient incentive in itself, should not be underestimated. It is common for such project funds to be under-spent, even though the project work is completed, illustrating the motivation of staff involved and their intrinsic commitment to the project itself.

6. Institutional funds available to support innovation in teaching vary not just in their overall size, which you would expect given the wide variation in size of institution, but in the amount available per member of staff. The total sum available to support innovation projects of all kinds, divided by the total number of full time academic staff, currently varies between institutions from over £10,000 per member of academic staff to under £100. In other words some institutions are investing one hundred times as much in innovation, pro rata, as others. The sums allocated to individual projects also vary widely between institutions and schemes. The largest allocation identified that used institutional funds for a single internal project, was £2.9 million, while a number of institutions regularly allocate sums as small as £300. In other words some innovation projects have ten thousand times the funding of others. The most common funding range is between one to four thousand pounds. In some cases there are small sums available to individuals and much larger sums available to departments.

7. It can be much harder for small institutions to mount credible innovation funding schemes as the funds available to them are often modest. Nevertheless some such schemes exist even in very small institutions. If innovation at the level of the individual teacher is the goal then sums as low as £500 may be sufficient to prompt bids and to encourage teachers to make changes. This is especially true in contexts where access to even small additional sums, for travelling, materials, or even photocopying, is strictly limited, or where even 20 hours of release from teaching duties makes a difference. In contrast such sums are not sufficient to incentivise innovation in most research-led contexts.

8. Literature on innovation highlights the difficulty innovators face in influencing those around them. It is common for innovations to cease once the innovator moves on, or once start-up funding runs out. It is also common to experience difficulties as soon as an attempt is made to roll the innovation out on a larger scale. In higher education many innovations can only be implemented on a small scale at the margins, outside the mainstream, because there are too many systems that only support conventional practice and that act as blocks to innovation. For example timetable systems, exam regulations or teachers' duty allocation systems all make some alternative forms of provision very difficult to implement. Some institutions are addressing this issue and are going to some trouble to identify and overcome infrastructural blocks. For example Coventry University employ an evaluator who spots difficulties faced by centrally funded e-learning projects and reports these to a central change-management team lead by a Pro Vice Chancellor.

9. Early versions of innovation funds placed relatively little emphasis on dissemination. At best, final project reports documenting project activity and spending, rather than project outcomes, were seen by a fund management committee. Institutions are now using a variety of mechanisms to make it more likely that others within the institution pick up and use what has been learnt from funded projects, so as to maximise the impact of investment in the initiative. This may involve:

- in-house newsletters reporting project progress and outcomes
- a website documenting projects, listing innovations, and providing contact information for teachers with special expertise
- regular informal seminars presented by those leading projects
- annual teaching conferences, or even faculty-based teaching conferences, to showcase projects
- award ceremonies and titles such as 'Teaching Fellow' for those who secure funding, and the publicising of the project at the ceremony

- funding for innovative departments to help them encourage other departments to adapt the innovation to different disciplinary contexts
- cross-institutional groups or teams made up of project staff who share a common focus (such as assessment) with a clear brief to support innovation across the institution rather than simply to complete their own project
- dissemination of project outcomes, by central educational development staff
- writing up project outcomes and formal evaluations in a way that can be disseminated at national events, for example through Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) Subject Centre events or Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) events, and through LTSN and ILT national newsletters and publications.

10. Evaluation of the outcome of projects is becoming much more sophisticated. In some institutions a scholarly approach is taken, with an expectation that outcomes should be publishable. This may involve full literature reviews at the outset, a serious attempt to find out what practice already exists, and properly planned research, often with the help of trained research assistants. This may involve substantial assistance from a central unit. Examples of such units are the Teaching and Learning Research Institute at Sheffield Hallam University and the Institute for the Advancement of University Teaching at Oxford University. The rationale for this emphasis varies from a belief in the value of the scholarship of teaching and the need for rigorous reflection, to the attempt to align teaching improvement processes and values with those of the dominant research culture. An emphasis on scholarly evaluation may increase the status of attempts to improve teaching.

11. There is evidence of institutions making their mechanisms to fund and support innovation in teaching part of their internally funded quality enhancement processes, rather than treating them as separate and short-term TQEF funded initiatives. The extent of this embedding will probably only be clear in the years following the cessation of TQEF funding.

## Section one:

# Features of funding and disseminating new teaching practices

## The size of the fund and the size of projects

12. Funds vary from a few thousand pounds in total for the whole institution to over £9 million. In a number of institutions there was already a fund of some kind before TQEF funding began so an existing fund became larger. In a few institutions there have been several different funds, either in sequence or in parallel, targeted on particular initiatives, most commonly supporting the use of Information Technology in teaching. While in some institutions the funding per project has increased as overall initiative funding has increased, in other institutions the emphasis has been on the extent of staff involvement rather than on the scale of individual projects.

## Source and control of funds

13. Funding may come via:

- a general purpose teaching and learning committee
- the group that develops and implements the learning and teaching strategy
- a central educational development unit
- a special sub-group of a committee specifically set up to administer the funds and with the management of the innovations fund as its only task
- departments to which TQEF funding is devolved
- departmental management groups set up to implement their local learning and teaching strategy or to administer local TQEF funds.

## Invitations to bid

14. Schemes that appear to work well in attracting a good range of high quality bids have the following features:

- they are well advertised, rather than relying on committees or single mechanisms, such as a newsletter for communication. Effective dissemination of previous rounds of the fund acts as effective advertising
- they are stable in terms of a consistent annual or bi-annual timetable that has become well known, rather than being ad hoc or varying from year to year
- they are stable in terms of their title and organisation so that they are recognisable to individuals, rather than new funds with new titles which are set up every time the agenda changes or the key committee re-organises. New priorities are managed by changing the criteria within the same stable scheme
- guidance concerning bidding is clear, with on-line forms and expectations for detailed planning at the bid stage that are realistic in relation to the size of funding available. Bids can be turned into project plans after funding has been agreed
- support for bidding is available from a central educational development unit or from past fund-holders.

## The purpose of funds

15. One might ask why intelligent and creative teachers need the incentive of funding in order to get them to innovate. Innovation funds appear to have a range of purposes:

- **Recognising and supporting enthusiasts** At the early stages of innovation one needs individuals with particularly original ideas and the enthusiasm to put them into action – individuals who want to break out of traditional conventions and try something new. Funding legitimises and gives status to their activity
- **Funding the time of over-busy teachers** Most change takes additional time and effort over and above the time it takes to maintain a stable course. Most teachers are at the limit or beyond it in terms of demands on their time. The main reason teachers give for not being able to change is simply lack of time. Most innovation funds fund the time of busy people to tackle additional tasks
- **Orienting attention to institutional priorities** Some foci of learning and teaching strategies are not necessarily the things to which teachers would most readily allocate additional effort. Providing funding in effect bribes teachers to address these institutional goals, and to put their personal interests to one side. In some institutional cultures such bribes would not work and funding has to be provided even to engage teachers with their own private interests.

### Using a variety of mechanisms to target projects on institutional priorities

At Nottingham Trent University there are six 'task groups', of eight to ten members, that each take responsibility for progress in relation to one strand of the learning and teaching strategy. These strands include skills development for students and continuing professional development (CPD) for teaching staff. Each task group has its own targets (three per task group) and each target has its own funding and time scale, with funding allocated in proportion to the scale of the tasks involved. The task groups are co-ordinated by the Centre for Academic Practice (CAP). CAP invites bids in relation to the targets set by the task groups. Bids must be supported by Faculty Learning and Teaching Co-ordinators (who sit on the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy Group chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor) and the Head of Department. This ensures a very close alignment of projects with institutional and departmental priorities.

For more details see: <http://www.ntu.ac.uk>

- **Building learning communities** In many academic environments there are fairly active and functional communities of practice concerned with research but there are often no comparable communities of practice concerned with teaching. Teaching has often been treated as a private, even secret, activity and may seldom be discussed. Good practice may rarely be made public and exchanged. Funding projects provides a focus for interaction, co-operation and discussion and the building of learning communities both within departments and across an institution
- **Staff development** Project-based activity is a very effective process for continuing professional development and is more attractive to experienced teachers than is training. The particular outcome of a project may be less important than the learning and development of the individuals involved – learning that will carry over to future situations and new problems that need addressing
- **Building capacity to change** This year's priorities may be forgotten and over the following years institutions will inevitably need to change repeatedly to tackle new challenges. What may be required is less a particular solution to today's problems than a capacity to tackle whatever problems emerge next
- **Learning** It is often the case that we simply do not know how best to teach new kinds of students or how best to exploit Communications and Information Technology (C&IT) to the best advantage.

Projects may provide a rich and flexible environment in which to experiment and learn. What may be disseminated from a project might well be what has been learnt (for example, what the real problems are and what not to do) rather than about a new teaching technique for others to emulate

- **Building infrastructure** Some projects are not concerned with individual innovations but with putting in place an infrastructure component – for example some student assessment software linked to the management information system - for all staff to use.

### **Multiple purposes of an innovations fund**

The University of Essex lists a range of purposes of its ‘Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund’ which are as follows:

- “to encourage innovation and the spread of best practice in teaching through a number of funded projects which encourage new methods and the diffusion of best practice
- to develop a climate of innovation, and raise the number of staff interested in undertaking it
- to promote efficiency in teaching – improvement in student learning together with economy of staff time
- to develop methods for the evaluation of teaching in the University
- to raise the number of staff willing and confident enough in their expertise in teaching to share it inside and outside their departments, and perhaps to act as consultants to others.”

For more details see: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/lt/innovation.htm>

## **Criteria for funding**

### **Linking to institutional priorities**

16. Some innovation funds are very open ended and allow teachers to use funds for almost any kind of teaching-related project. There may be few or no strings attached to the use of funds and minimal reporting requirements. However it is now much more common to link funds very closely to priorities specified in the institutional mission or the learning and teaching strategy. Some strategic goals are specified in such broad language (“improving the quality of teaching”) that almost any application to the fund could be considered, and this may be deliberate where there are likely to be few applicants. More commonly, a number of areas for development are targeted, such as cost-effective assessment, student support to improve retention, or greater flexibility in course delivery through some kind of resource-based approach. The list of areas may be fairly long and allow quite a range of projects to be funded. Sometimes the three or four goals of the teaching strategy are specified and all projects are expected to address these. Where funding innovation is a more well established activity it is possible to be even more dirigiste. Sometimes one strand of the strategy is specified each year so that there is a concentration of projects on one topic, with educational development support for the year re-focussed on that topic, and a conference at the end of the year on that topic. Here there is a realistic chance of making progress across the institution. The following year the effort moves on to the next priority in the strategy. In contrast some institutions appear to adopt a ‘scatter-gun’ approach and, given the modest scale of the innovation funding and the small proportion of teachers involved, may dilute the focus of innovation to the point of invisibility.

### **Scholarship**

Some criteria include the requirement to review existing literature or practice and to produce scholarly outcomes. Others may exclude ‘research’ and focus clearly on pragmatic, usable outcomes.

### **Dissemination**

Criteria may include a requirement to specify how outcomes of the project will be disseminated, or at least an explicit agreement to offer a seminar or write up a case study for an institutional website or newsletter.

### Explicit use of criteria linked to strategic goals

The University of Essex specifies criteria that are closely linked to its learning and teaching strategy and criteria relating to the operation of the fund. It lists these in the application form and requires applicants to identify which are being addressed in the application. It reads:

“Describe your project in terms of the TALIF criteria given in the Notes for Applicants [please tick the appropriate boxes]

- (a) It will improve the quality and effectiveness of student learning in the University
- (b) It will improve the quality and effectiveness of student assessment in the University
- (c) It includes proposals for evaluation
- (d) It will deliver materials or experience of direct benefit to the teaching of the department
- (e) It fits the teaching and learning objectives of the department and the University
- (f) The costs are beyond normal department resources
- (g) It is likely to result in economies of staff time
- (h) It will improve the development, assessment or accreditation of key skills”

For more details see: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/lt/innovation.htm>

### Collaboration

Criteria may emphasise the importance of collaboration between teachers, may welcome team bids, or may require more than one course to be involved, or even more than one department, to work together. Bids may be required to specify which cross-institutional innovation support group they will join and work with. In some cases, where the building of a community of practice is a goal of the initiative, this may be more important than the particular content of the project.

### Department support

To avoid funding ‘mavericks’ whose innovations cut across departmental priorities, or to stop projects that would involve use of resources departments could not sustain, bids are often required to demonstrate departmental support. This may involve at the minimum a signature or letter from the Head of Department. It may also involve an explanation of how the project links to the departmental learning and teaching strategy, a formal agreement to release the staff involved from other duties to make the project viable, or even an explicit commitment of departmental funds to match central funding. In practice staff named in project bids can find it difficult to allocate the time necessary to undertake the bid and so formal agreements about workload plans can be useful.

### Involvement of students

Some funds encourage involvement of students, especially where the learning and teaching strategy emphasises student-centred learning. Case Study 7 describes a fund that not only encourages student involvement but allows students to bid for grants.

In some contexts, at the point a project has been selected for approval, but before funding is allocated, negotiations are undertaken to align the project more closely with the criteria and with institutional priorities.

## Support

17. Not all teachers have project management skills or are experienced ‘change agents’. Evaluation informed by the scholarship of teaching may be new to them. They may be unaware of existing literature or practice. There is however plenty of scope for supporting funded projects so as to maximise their effectiveness and impact. Support may include:

- individual guidance on bids so as to develop proposals with a reasonable chance of success and impact
- individual consultancy to turn bids into project plans once funding has been allocated
- expert technical advice on the topic concerned (e.g. on the design of web-based learning materials)
- bringing projects together to share experience of managing projects and to help tackle on-going difficulties
- linking up past successful project leaders with new project staff
- creating cross-institutional teams of those projects or project staff that focus on the same issues (e.g. an assessment group)
- interim reviews, perhaps associated with interim reports on progress
- workshops on aspects of project management, evaluation or dissemination.
- provision of the time of specialist support staff, such as research assistants or technicians.

Many of these features are built in to project support within the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL). A Project Managers' Handbook from this fund, containing advice and examples on a wide range of project issues, can be found at: <http://www.ncteam.ac.uk/>.

The central educational development unit may allocate a substantial amount of staff time to support projects or this may be a role performed by departmental 'Teaching Co-ordinators' who are themselves supported from the centre.

### **Central educational development support for projects**

At Keele University two members of staff in the central staff development unit support 21 projects and a third member of staff is involved in evaluating their success.

For list of projects see:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/projects/index.htm>

For more details on the invitation to bid see:

[http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/projects/guidance\\_for\\_round\\_two.htm](http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/landt/projects/guidance_for_round_two.htm)

### **Supporting teachers in departments**

At Loughborough University staff undertaking innovation within departments were seconded to work in a central unit for two days per week. This did not work especially well and now central support is provided in the secondees own departments and this works considerably better.

For more details see: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/service/ltd/>

### **Support for projects from a user group and from students**

At the Surrey Institute of Art and Design support for Teaching Fellows who undertake projects consists of:

- a 'user group' for the use of a computer package called 'Blackboard' (as all projects concern the use of C&IT in teaching) which networks to allow the sharing of practice and problems
- regular monitoring of progress against plans and oral presentations to the Learning and Teaching Committee
- very supportive students who are on the Learning and Teaching Committee.

## What is funding spent on?

18. Most innovation funds are used primarily to buy out teachers' time so that they have time to allocate to the project. This may involve a fixed proportion of their time (for example, 0.5 full time equivalent) or however many hours they need to be replaced. Funding is also used for:

- technician time
- secretarial time
- student time
- travel costs to visit other institutions
- conference fees to attend to or present project outcomes
- books and learning materials
- software.

Teaching Quality Enhancement Funding is not supposed to be used to purchase computing software though some innovation funds do allow for it. At Southampton Institute, Teaching Fellows are encouraged to attend the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) conference in order to support their development and to expose them to a wider teaching development community.

### Using funds only for staff time

At Surrey Institute of Art and Design all the funding is used to support three 'Teaching Fellows', half of whose teaching duties are bought out. There is no flexibility in use of funds but the way the arrangement works guarantees that their time can indeed be released. All the projects focus on the use of C&IT in teaching and any resources required for technical support, hardware or software are supplied by the institution in another way.

## Dissemination

19. In some institutions it is an achievement to attract sufficient staff to be able to allocate all of the available funding, and little is expected of projects following their completion other than that they provide a report for accountability purposes. Where the scholarship of teaching is emphasised and scholarly outputs such as journal articles are produced, dissemination may be formal and often outside the institution, in journals and national conferences, rather than internal. There is also small scale funding available from LTSN Subject Centres where dissemination takes place nationally within disciplines rather than within institutions across disciplines.

Many institutions have dissemination processes in place as part of well established educational development activity. Institutions that have had teaching newsletters, seminar series or even annual conferences for many years are better placed to disseminate the additional outcomes from funded innovation projects.

Other institutions have established new forms of dissemination in order to maximise the potential benefit of innovations developed within an individual course or department across the institution.

### Planning dissemination

At the University of Northumbria even their very small £1,000 grants to individuals are accompanied by a requirement to produce a two-page final report for use in dissemination and to engage in some dissemination activity. This covers:

- “presenting a paper at a University of Northumbria at Newcastle conference
- presenting a paper at an external conference
- submitting an article to an academic publication
- participating in a staff development programme.”

Source: The University of Northumbria ‘Applauding and Promoting Teaching’ (APT) scheme

For more details see: <http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/LTA/pages/apt.htm>

**Final reports** Reports may be required for accountability purposes but these are likely to focus on the use of funds and the extent to which planned activities have been completed, rather than on being valuable to potential end-users. It may be sensible to require projects to produce, in addition to a report for accountability purposes, a short account of the innovation in a form that might attract and inform others, together with contact information.

**Seminars and workshops** Some institutions have a tradition of using short seminars to share good practice across the institution, and the outcomes of funded projects simply provide additional material with which to fill the seminars.

### Lunchtime seminars

For many years Oxford Brookes University held what they called ‘lunchtime seminars’ for the purpose of spreading innovation. They took place once a week every term, every year for about a decade. A theme was chosen for each term – perhaps ‘learning in groups’ or ‘resource-based learning’ and the Educational Methods Unit would find examples of teachers using methods related to the theme and teachers were then invited to present an informal seminar. Sometimes this involved projects funded under a ‘staff release scheme’ but more often it was unfunded innovation – simply about what teachers were introducing to improve their courses. No-one ever refused to present as they were proud to describe their achievements to their colleagues and little preparation was required. The seminars usually took the following informal form:

- “this is what we used to do and these were the problems
- we considered the following options before choosing to do this
- this is exactly what we did
- this is how it turned out, warts and all
- if you were going to copy us, this is the advice we would give.”

A programme for the next few weeks would be advertised and teachers signed on to a mailing list to be kept informed – up to thirty per cent of all teaching staff signed up each term - but there was no commitment to attend. Each week free coffee was provided for the first 20 to turn up and free sandwiches for the first ten – to encourage prompt arrival for what was a short session. Seminars were very informal and lasted 30-50 minutes so as to fit in over the lunch period. Sometimes they took place in a laboratory or resource room within a department because that was where the innovation was implemented. Each week the seminar was written up in one or two pages and distributed to those on the mailing list, together with the topic for the next week. Many staff signed up to receive the information every term without ever turning up to the seminars, but still reported finding it very interesting. Part of the success of these seminars was their informality, the low profile of educational theory or management rhetoric, and the fact that it was practising teachers and colleagues that presented all the seminars. Presenters were characteristically honest about failures – even when the Vice Chancellor popped in from time to time!

Educational development units often have a programme of seminars on a variety of topics and projects. The outcome could be of particular interest to a wide audience and topics are simply allocated seminar slots in the programme. In other contexts a programme is created specifically for the innovation projects. Often it is possible to see what an innovation is really about quite quickly and presenters only need to give a thirty minute presentation. Those who are interested can follow up with the presenter afterwards. On other occasions fuller workshops are used to provide insights or skills that would enable a teacher to go away and use the innovation themselves - or at least to begin to adapt it to their own context.

- **Newsletters** Some institutions have had teaching newsletters for many years in one form or another, to provide a focus for writing up and documenting innovations so that their dissemination is less transitory, and reaches more people, than a seminar. Sometimes there is more emphasis on high production standards and an element of status to the newsletter than there is in quick and effective dissemination. In some contexts the standard of reporting has been progressively raised, with articles edited or even reviewed and in a few cases, the publication carrying an ISBN number and made available to those outside the institution. Some of these newsletters are also used to disseminate information from outside the institution. Some institutions have made it part of their learning and teaching strategy to find out about and use more ideas from other institutions, rather than to rely solely on internal innovation, and may use a newsletter to disseminate others' innovations.

- **Conferences** It is becoming increasingly common for institutions to have an annual conference to disseminate the latest developments in teaching and to provide a showcase for the outcomes of the most successful funded innovation projects. Typically these will include a presentation from the Vice Chancellor or Pro Vice Chancellor, an outside speaker with a reputation that could pull in an audience, and a series of parallel seminars or workshops led by teachers. Events may have a theme related to an aspect of the learning and teaching strategy or to a current 'hot topic', or may be open to innovations of all kinds. Progress with the learning and teaching strategy or a 'state of the nation' review may be presented.

The first time such conferences are mounted participation may be modest and likewise the standard of contributions. Where such conferences are well established and have been going long enough to be part of the academic calendar, participation can exceed sixty per cent of all teaching staff. In some institutions with large and relatively autonomous faculties, most faculties now have their own teaching conferences – usually a single day event. These may be used to emphasise a particular faculty management priority (such as increasing student retention or saving staff time on assessment). Local conferences are more likely to be of relevance to those who attend and may attract as much as eighty per cent of teaching staff. As with institutional conferences, over a period of some years the standard of presentations and even of formal papers, can increase markedly, with some conferences being able to select from competing proposals and others publishing proceedings in a scholarly format.

## Innovation databases

20. Some institutions have attempted to build a central collection of documentation about innovation and about the expertise that created this innovation. This may involve a register or web-based database. The University of Hull publishes glossy brochures as a showcase for innovation in teaching. The Open University has an electronic 'institutional research database' where all project reports are able to be searched, with links to full reports and to authors, and is currently building a more interactive 'Knowledge Network' that enables:

- innovation and expertise as well as literature about a teaching innovation to be organised for easy access
- those interested or involved in related topics to communicate with each other or to comment on reports
- 'news' items about innovations to be posted out by email, automatically, to those who have indicated their areas of interest.

### **Documenting innovations**

The University of Hull has documented innovations in two ways. One is a triennially produced 'Handbook of Innovations in Teaching and Learning' which contains brief descriptions of a wide range of innovations – one per page – in a publication with high production standards. It is used to support subject review and audit as well as to disseminate the innovations. Issues of this publication have been created by trawling across the institution simply identifying interesting teaching, learning and assessment practices. The other is a 'portfolio of case studies' containing about 30 short case studies of a range of teaching and learning problems and issues, and the way they were tackled. As funded innovations projects (about 12 each year) are completed, they produce more material to put into the next issue of these publications.

For more details see: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/ifl/EDT>

### **Dissemination through networking**

21. All of the above dissemination mechanisms tend to focus on the information itself rather than on the way communities of practice are built, or the way networking is supported, so that the sharing of good ideas is undertaken as a more integrated component of collaboration between teaching staff. As part of implementing learning and teaching strategies many institutions have constructed networks of staff that share ideas and spread good practice as one of their main briefs. These can consist of:

- groups made up of departmental 'teaching co-ordinators' which enables those individuals who are most aware of what innovation is going on in one department to regularly meet others in a similar position in other departments. Funding for the time of these individuals may be sufficient (for example half time secondments) for them not simply to inform each other, but to be able to go into each others' departments and help one another to implement innovations that were originated elsewhere
- groups made up of those interested in a particular topic (e.g. assessment or use of C&IT) or with responsibility for implementing one strand of the learning and teaching strategy (e.g. concerning student retention) across the institution. These groups may have formal plans, a budget and targets to meet, or may have considerable autonomy to progress a theme in whatever way they see fit
- cross-institutional projects that bring many or even all departments together in relation to a specific topic (e.g. specifying and assessing learning outcomes, economical assessment). This not only makes it likely that there will be broad progress across the institution on a topic, rather than 'hot' and 'cold' spots, but also that good practice in one department will spread quickly to other departments without there being a need for special events.

In an institution where such networking is functioning well, formal dissemination may neither be necessary nor effective.

### **Dissemination through an organisation and through sharing information**

Nottingham Trent University uses a range of dissemination mechanisms, namely:

- the way the scheme is organised, through task groups and Learning and Teaching Co-ordinators, makes spreading practice across faculty boundaries very easy without projects having to go to any specific effort
- some projects operate across all faculties, for example funding the implementation of an innovation in one module in every faculty, or funding staff time to write learning outcomes, in every faculty
- a series of seminars, run by the Centre for Academic Practice
- a one day conference, run each year on a specific topic (such as assessment) with external keynote speakers and internally run workshops

- a journal entitled 'Innovations in Learning and Teaching', published twice a year – a scholarly publication bridging the gap between internal teaching newsletters and external refereed journals
- an on-line web-based bulletin entitled WEBTALK documenting latest developments in the use of C&IT.

For more details see: <http://www.celt.ntu.ac.uk/>

## Spreading and embedding new teaching practice

22. Dissemination that only involves making information about project outcomes available is unlikely to succeed in spreading and embedding new practices. Institutions are becoming more sophisticated in their management of change and their innovations funds do a great deal more than simply fund projects.

### Leading change

23. The involvement of the Pro Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning in the selection of projects, and in events to disseminate projects, can help to give status to an initiative and inform senior management about what is going on. It may also build senior management commitment to sustain the initiative. Most importantly, though, it provides a direct route to feed back information about problems and infrastructure blocks that need addressing centrally and that the Pro Vice Chancellor can take action on.

### Requiring collaboration across courses or departments

24. Some schemes build mechanisms to spread practice into criteria for funding projects by requiring there to be collaboration between teachers; requiring more than one course to be involved or even requiring more than one department to be involved. It would be possible to have different funding limits for projects so as to encourage such collaboration, such as:

- up to £2,000 for an individual teacher
- up to £5,000 where two courses are involved
- up to £10,000 where two departments are involved.

### Funding collaborative projects

25. Most innovations funds give funding to individuals. Some fund teams, including academic related staff, support staff or even students. Sometimes these teams can be quite large even when funding is quite modest. The emphasis may be on building communities of practice and the sharing of practice in general, using the project as a vehicle to achieve this.

### Backing winners

26. Not all projects work out well or even complete their planned activities. Some complete but do not improve student learning, or only do so at impractical cost. Others may solve a local or content-specific problem but have little potential for wider dissemination. A few not only succeed but hold out enormous potential for many other teachers, courses and students. For example a successful local innovation involving peer tutoring at the University of Bournemouth has been taken up and is being spread as widely as possible, using external funding (from the FDTL programme). The FDTL itself includes a mechanism to 'back winners' by providing up to ten per cent additional funding to projects to operate for a further year in order to work with 'end users' who have already been identified as wanting to use whatever the innovation involves. Such modest additional funding can

have a marked impact on the overall cost-effectiveness of the project, perhaps doubling take up and use for only ten per cent more funding.

### Funding 'end users' rather than 'producers'

27. Very often there is already a great deal of innovation and effective practice within an institution, even if it is hidden away in corners. The need may be more to spread this practice rather than to generate more innovation. What may be the main obstruction to such spreading is not the awareness of potential end users, or even their interest and commitment, but the availability of their time to take up and exploit existing innovations. This may be particularly true where time consuming use of C&IT is involved; where considerable adaptation is required, or where new teaching skills need to be acquired. In such circumstances it may make more sense to fund end users to take up existing innovations, perhaps with modest funding for the innovator to support them. In the FDTL programme many projects have budgets that include financial support for end users themselves and allocations of funds for 'consultancy' support for these end users by the project staff. This may involve as much as thirty per cent of the total budget. We have identified no examples of institutions where funding is available to 'end users' or even where funding to projects involved a component for supporting end users.

### Recognition and reward for fund holders

28. In the past it was usually considered reward enough for individuals that they received funding to undertake their project. In practice projects require additional work beyond that which can readily be funded. Increasingly schemes provide other rewards and forms of recognition for those involved in funded innovation:

- titles, such as 'Teaching Fellow'
- temporary increases in pay, or personal cash awards
- temporary promotions (e.g. to Principal Lecturer)
- secretarial or technical support
- funds to use for personal benefit, such as attending conferences or visiting other institutions
- a stronger CV that can be used as part of a portfolio of evidence to be used towards Teaching Awards, promotion on the grounds of teaching excellence, or nomination for the ILT's National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
- membership of an institutional 'teaching academy' or cross institutional group that is recognised as having special expertise and status on teaching, and which is deferred to when teaching policy is developed
- membership of an enjoyable and mutually supportive cross-institutional group of project leaders.

A range of such mechanisms are outlined in *Recognising and Rewarding Excellent Teaching*, Gibbs and Habeshaw, 2002.

## Section two:

# Case studies of institutions that fund innovation and disseminate new teaching practices

### Case Study 1

## Devolved funding for innovation within faculties with incentives for innovating

The University of Manchester has a devolved approach to its teaching and learning strategy. Each faculty has its own strategy, which may develop some of the faculty's own priorities besides contributing to those of the University, and its own share of TQEF funds to implement this strategy. Of the £25,000 to £35,000 funding per year per faculty, up to £10,000 is allocated to support innovation projects. A panel considers bids from within the faculty, against priorities set by their own strategy.

The University also uses its own funds, supplemented by TQEF funds, to support innovation of potential value to the whole institution. For example, one project based in Philosophy is developing a module in thinking skills which may be adapted as a generic module for use across several faculties. Had this development been of potential value only to Philosophy then the faculty fund would have been the appropriate source. The University has three central funds:

- Teaching and Learning Support Fund (£55,000 annually of non-TQEF funding, allocated to departments to help embed and disseminate good practice)
- Curriculum Innovation Fund (£4,000 - £10,000 per project, total of £120,000 annually, administered jointly with UMIST). About 20 projects are funded out of 50-60 bids each year, so it is quite competitive. The application form resembles that used for the HEFCE's Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
- Distributed Learning Fund (for e-learning) (total of £150,000 annually).

Each fund has comprehensive guidelines, and support is available for bidding and for conducting projects from the central Teaching and Learning Support Unit (TLSU). Projects are expected to be oriented towards the goals of the institutional Teaching and Learning Strategy.

Dissemination across faculties is supported by:

- a 'Teaching Research and Development Network' that spans Manchester University and UMIST. So far it has involved 190 staff in workshops, seminars and focus group meetings. There are annual publications and on-line access to discussions and work in progress
- a central register of all projects, however they are funded
- a 'Good Practice' web site with exemplars of useful ideas, developments and material
- a publication produced every two years containing reports of projects, entitled 'Snapshots of Innovation'
- brief reports in the University's fortnightly publication 'This Week, Next Week'
- seminars run by the TLSU.

There are two forms of incentive for staff to engage with these opportunities to obtain funding for innovation. First, there are biennial 'Innovations in the Curriculum Awards' of £500 to staff of the University and UMIST who have introduced successful innovations. The awards are made at a ceremony by the Vice Chancellors of both institutions. Authors of articles that are published in 'Snapshots of Innovation' receive an honorarium of £50. Second, promotion involves equal

weighting of teaching and research. Panel members may award applicants up to three points for research, three points for teaching, two points for administration and two additional points for either teaching or research. Data gathered over the last three years show that up to half of those promoted have received higher scores for teaching than for research.

**Web links for further information:**

Curriculum Innovation Fund: <http://intranet.man.ac.uk/rsd/ci/funding/guide1.shtml>

Curriculum Innovation Awards: <http://intranet.man.ac.uk/rsd/ci/rewarding/cuawards.shtml>

## Case Study 2

### Managing innovation targeted on strategic priorities

Anglia Polytechnic University (APU) has developed a Learning and Teaching Fellowship Scheme which funds innovations in learning and teaching targeted on the priorities identified in its learning and teaching strategy, including priorities to:

- widen access and university of local choice
- enhance the student experience
- guarantee the quality of provision and the standards of awards
- promote internationalism
- achieve effective learning and teaching
- support research and scholarly activity
- promote inclusivity/widen participation
- promote student-centredness
- promote flexible learning.

A similar, more modestly funded scheme had operated, with some central support, for six years before TQEF funding was available. Now £40,000 is allocated each year, in two tranches per year: one for projects to start after Easter and one in September. Groups may bid as well as individuals, and those successful are awarded the title of Teaching and Learning Fellow for the duration of the project. Typically projects are funded in the range £600 to £5,000, with an average of about £3,000. Up to 20 Teaching Fellowships have been awarded in a single round, spread across about ten projects.

As can be seen from the following list of projects, many have potential for benefit beyond the module or School in which they are conducted, and indeed this is a criterion for the allocation of funding:

- development of a module designed to promote an awareness of listening skills
- developing the use of games, role play and related techniques in the teaching of History and Politics
- mentoring in teaching and learning
- identification and evaluation of appropriate learning platforms for open and distance learning
- researching student feedback systems, both across the university and at other institutions, in order to recommend future practice.
- developing a detailed specification of key skills required by students on construction and surveying courses.
- promoting good practice in the use of assessment schemes and marking criteria.

The Teaching and Learning Fellows are supported while they conduct their projects. Meetings are convened by the Learning and Teaching Unit that address issues such as project management.

Report writing and presentation skills are also addressed, to improve the effectiveness of dissemination. If Teaching and Learning Fellows wish to develop their project in a scholarly way and undertake research into teaching and write up the outcomes for publication, there is additional support in the form of individual guidance and a booklet (“Using research into student learning to underpin teaching”) that contains examples of pedagogic research undertaken by lecturers within APU. There is also support from a newly developed group of mentors for Fellows, drawn from those who have successfully completed Fellowships in the past. Additional support is provided within schools from the Learning and Teaching Advisor of which there is one in each school. Their role is to deal with a range of teaching issues. School Teaching Advisors are promoted to Principal Lecturer and the Pro Vice Chancellor for Learning and Teaching chairs the appointments board for Schools Advisors. A network has been constructed for advisors that helps both to support teaching development and to disseminate their outcomes across School boundaries.

Advisors and Fellows are expected to disseminate their work throughout the University and outside, via conferences and publications where appropriate, as well as introducing innovative change and embedding good practice within the University.

#### **Dissemination involves:**

a one day central learning and teaching conference that operates once a year in September, and two further learning and teaching one day conferences in January on each of the institution’s two sites (Cambridge and Chelmsford). About 100 staff attend each of these events at which Learning and Teaching Fellows and others present innovations relating to the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The conferences address the institutions’ strategic teaching priorities rather than teaching in general a twice yearly published university magazine entitled ‘Networks’ which focuses on learning and teaching developments, scholarly activity and innovations, published by the Learning and Teaching Unit. Issues of ‘Networks’ contain accounts of Learning and Teaching Fellows’ projects and other teaching developments within Schools.

#### **Web links for further information:**

LTU web site: [www.apu.ac.uk/ltu](http://www.apu.ac.uk/ltu) and click on ‘people and contacts’ to look at individual projects

## **Case Study 3**

### **Individual and departmental funding for innovation**

Queen’s University Belfast distinguishes between small scale innovation undertaken by individual teachers and larger scale innovation, usually initiated by departments. For the former, funding of up to £2,500 was available under the University’s Innovations Fund but this was found to be insufficient to attract sufficient good quality bids and the ceiling has now been raised to £4,000. For bids to their Developing Learning and Teaching (DLT) Fund the limit is £10,000. Even individual bids “must be consistent with the objectives of the University Plan for Learning and Teaching”. Funding is used mainly to release staff so that they have time for teaching development or pedagogic research. Funding is not normally allowed to be used to hire additional staff to undertake the project work or for equipment.

Projects are selected by a panel representing each faculty, and including Information Services and the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT). The Innovations Fund panel has been chaired by the University’s ILT National Teaching Fellow. An explicit set of criteria is used on a sheet to judge applications. Applications are required to specify what collaboration with other staff is involved and how the project will use central support, and the support of the Dean is required, to ensure that faculties are aware of what is going on.

A good deal of importance is placed on project monitoring and evaluation. Applications have to specify how the project will be delivered, with deadlines and schedules, which are subsequently confirmed in an agreed operational plan. Short interim reports (300 words) are required every six months with a specified focus for each. These interim reports are required in part to meet HEFCE requirements for monitoring of use of TQEF funds. The final report is required to contain an evaluation of the impact of the project on student learning and the project bid has to contain plans for such evaluation. Ten per cent of funding is held back until a final report is submitted.

There have been many bids from young staff who have completed the Queen's Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, illustrating the way that educational and staff development activities can complement each other and also the difficulty of engaging experienced staff with innovation. Bids for individual innovations are mainly quite specific to particular subject matter. For example one individual Innovations Fund project was entitled "Computer Assisted Assessment for Solids and Structures C1". In contrast one departmental project for DLT funding has the aim "to maximise the School's use of on line resources" and such projects are more commonly concerned with dissemination, embedding and wider scale impact, at least within a department.

The educational development unit (CELT) brings projects of a similar kind together in 'networking lunches' twice a year and these are well attended and lively. Projects funded in several rounds of funding and projects that are progressing successfully make informal presentations to those who have just received funding. However projects mainly work independently and do not expect much in the way of assistance or interaction with others.

Awards are publicised in the University's newsletter 'Queens Now' and criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer have been modified to include evidence of innovation in teaching methods. A number of promotions recently have been partly on the basis of engagement with teaching development activities.

#### **Web links for further information:**

University Plan for Learning and Teaching: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/cap/L&Tplan.htm>

## **Case Study 4**

### **Department funding for innovation linked to the institutional strategy**

Attracting individuals to bid for innovation projects of interest to themselves may not be the most effective way to develop teaching across a department. It can be easy to sufficiently reflect institutional strategic priorities in a bid to obtain funding without addressing any departmental priorities, and Heads of Department may be sufficiently pleased that anyone has bothered to come forward to bid that they will support almost any bid. The resulting pattern of innovation may not be very focussed or strategic in nature.

In some contexts departments are more strategic and funding is allocated to the department rather than to individuals. At John Moores University (JMU) most of the TQEF funding is passed straight down to schools provided that they have a learning and teaching strategy and have explicit plans for using the funds to implement that strategy. Schools have to identify how they wanted to use their TQEF allocation based on school learning and teaching priorities and at the same time show how they mapped onto, and were addressing, the institutional strategy targets. This is similar to the mechanisms as used by the HEFCE: learning and teaching strategy funding is allocated in relation to student numbers and is an entitlement once a proper strategy and operational plans are produced that address HEFCE priorities.

As with the HEFCE mechanisms, continued funding is subject to annual reporting on progress and the rolling development of operational plans. There is no competitive bidding. The implementation of the learning and teaching strategy at school level is addressed as if it were a project, with operational plans, schedules, budgets, identified responsibilities and so on.

The advantage is that departments have to discuss what their priorities are and plan what to do about addressing them. Reporting becomes part of the annual cycle of review and planning. Funding is used, in the main, to support staff involved in implementing key components of the departmental strategy. The key strategic objective at JMU is now student retention. In earlier rounds schools placed a great deal of emphasis on student support and on assessment issues. This is unlikely to have been the case if individuals had bid for whatever interested them.

At JMU there are also centrally managed mechanisms to support, and especially to disseminate, innovation by individuals and teams, including teaching and support staff:

- ‘Teaching Fellow Awards’ (each of £3,000) which are in part a reward for individuals and in part a small scale dissemination project related to teaching innovations that they identify and then carry out. Half of the award is used for dissemination. These dissemination projects also focus on priorities in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy such as widening participation and student progression. £9,000 has been allocated to three Teaching Fellows
- ‘Curriculum Innovation Awards’ (normally of £500 - £2,000) for individuals or teams to recognise curriculum innovation that has already been undertaken, and to work with the Learning Development Team to disseminate the outcomes more widely across the university. £14,000 has been allocated to 12 award winners
- ‘Curriculum Development Awards’ (normally of £500 - £2,000) for new curriculum development oriented to themes in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Each proposal has to include a dissemination strategy. £20,000 has been allocated to 12 projects
- ‘Teaching related research projects’ (for £500 - £3,000) for individuals or teams to research their teaching practice. All such research projects are required to be reported in a refereed journal article or conference paper and also to involve a presentation for dissemination within JMU. £22,000 has been allocated to nine projects.

The centre also holds dissemination events. Examples include a recent one day workshop on assessment to ‘showcase’ what staff have been doing in this area and a two day summer teaching and learning conference at which all Teaching Fellows and many award winners offered presentations based on their work. Outcomes are also disseminated through articles in the JMU Learning and Teaching press. Staff report back on outcomes of their development work through their own School Learning and Teaching ‘away days’. There are also ad hoc examples of staff sharing outcomes of their development work with colleagues from other schools or departments.

#### **Web links for further information:**

JMU Learning & Teaching: <http://cwis.livjm.ac.uk/lig/lweb>

Teaching and Learning Awards: <http://cwis.livjm.ac.uk/lig/lweb/gen/awards.htm>

## **Case Study 5**

### **Innovation projects as one component in larger scale strategic support for change**

Coventry University has been engaged in developing the use of C&IT in teaching, and particularly the use of WebCT across the whole institution, for some years now. The first stage of the initiative involved a collection of large scale innovation projects focussing on C&IT. Since then a much wider initiative has evolved in which the project component is only one part and the use of C&IT is only one focus, albeit an important one. At the centre of the process of innovation is a ‘Teaching

and Learning Task Force' which has a wide-ranging role across the university and consists of:

- **Teaching Fellows** The Teaching and Learning Strategy funds eight half-time Teaching Fellows (four full time equivalent posts), one from each school. They have a broad educational development role within their school, including supporting Subject Review, supporting colleagues in their teaching and innovations, staff development and consultancy including organising workshops and other events about teaching, networking across the university including working in other schools where appropriate and contributing to university-wide projects.

The Teaching and Learning Committee that oversees the implementation of the learning and teaching strategy identifies, from time to time, projects that need to operate across the whole university. Recent projects have included the specification of learning outcomes and writing of programme specifications, developing a revised code of practice concerning the development of skills within curricula and distance learning. The Teaching Fellows make sure that such projects are not simply well informed and take account of varied school practices and contexts, but that new policy is implemented across the university, and this may involve identifying and addressing infrastructure blocks that would prevent educationally sound innovations from spreading and embedding.

- **Individual Task Force projects** The Task Force also contains all those funded to undertake innovation projects. There are currently nine such projects. The difference between these projects and those in many other institutions is that many of them have a broad focus of obvious generalisability (e.g. 'Teaching Large Groups' and 'Supporting Overseas Students') and the staff involved are members of the Task Force and collaborate and engage in cross institutional dissemination, rather than working largely in isolation. Task Force members used to bid for, and implement, their own projects but now these are proposed centrally, though consultation, and implemented collaboratively across the institution in a more coherent way.

- **Supporters** The Task Force contains a total of 16 'supporters' who are educational development staff or from the Library, Student Services and Computing Services, and includes the Pro Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning). The involvement of academic-related and non-academic staff from support services has made quite an impact on the extent of implementation. The support of the Task Force and the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is a key focus of work of the Centre for Higher Education Development.

Dissemination in this context is an integrated component of the operation of the Task Force rather than a superficial add-on. In addition there is:

- an annual teaching and learning conference which in 2001 attracted over 160 staff, many of whom were already involved in projects or implementation of innovation within their schools
- a Diploma/MA in Teaching and Learning that goes one step beyond the initial certificate programme for new lecturers, and supports individual innovation
- workshops and seminars relating to projects, often run in others' schools
- work in teams within projects, some of which involve substantial numbers.

There is a prominent element of evaluation of the initiative as a whole, and the way the Task Force has operated has changed significantly as a result of better understanding how innovation and its spread can be supported or blocked.

There is no individual reward for those involved, beyond the recognition that comes from their institution-wide role, but many former project holders and members of the Task Force have either won a Teaching Award or have subsequently been promoted. Some are now in more senior positions (including an Associate Dean) and influence further innovation. Two former Task Force members were nominated for, and awarded, a National Teaching Fellowship in 2001 and 2002. The initiative develops innovators and 'change agents' as well as the innovations themselves.

#### **Web links for further information:**

<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/ched/taskforce/index.htm>

## Case Study 6

# Funding projects as part of a process of building a learning community

The University of Staffordshire's learning and teaching strategy is entitled: "Building a Learning Community". The strategy states:

*"It is essential that we develop effective dissemination processes to share good practice, learn from each other, and build these into our planning processes. .... The Learning Development Centre will be the focus for innovation in teaching and learning and the centre of a network of expert colleagues within the university.."*

TQEF funding is allocated to schools based on their full time equivalent student numbers. Schools identify their own innovation projects within themes set by the institution's strategy. If similar projects develop in different schools then the Learning Development Centre encourages these projects to work together. Each school has a Project Director to lead the implementation of the learning and teaching strategy and all these Project Directors meet monthly to share practice and outcomes across the institution.

A newsletter that appears three times a year is circulated to all staff and contains articles written by the Project Directors describing their school-based activities. This newsletter is also produced on the web. Schools are also paired up so as to optimise the opportunity to share similar developments across school boundaries, and schools present and demonstrate their developments to each other. There have also been institution-wide Learning and Teaching Days, though these have been less successful.

Funding innovation at Staffordshire therefore has the following characteristics:

- priorities are specified centrally (after lengthy debate and consultation)
- funding is allocated to schools, who use it to address these institutional priorities
- there is considerable emphasis on sharing between schools, with new roles and new structures in place to facilitate this collaborative work and the building of a functioning learning community
- there is comparatively little emphasis in individual innovation.

Since the 'Building and Learning Community' initiative has been under way there has been a very marked increase in Subject Review scores, with none below 22/24 where previously scores had been as low as 17/24.

### Web links for further information:

<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/services/ldc/blc/index.htm>

## Case Study 7

# Funding involvement of students in innovation at University College Worcester

University College Worcester (UCW) allocates approximately £25,000 a year to fund small scale projects: a total of 20 projects of up to £2,500 each in the past two years. At the College £2,500 usually covers the cost of replacement teaching on a single module. It is a relatively small institution with just ten departments so with 24 projects many have had two projects already. The first criterion for judging bids is that they are 'student-centred' and all projects involve students in an active role in some way.

An unusual feature of the scheme is that any groups of staff can bid for projects. For example there have been projects based in Student Support Services, in the Careers Service and in the Equal Opportunities Centre. Even more unusually, students can not only be involved, and are paid for their involvement, but can also bid. The Students Union has successfully bid for several projects. An example is a project in which students have played a central role concerning widening access to History courses. It involved paying students for ten hours to 'twin' with an further education or school student, show them round the College and spend a day with them on campus, so they could see what it would be like studying history in higher education. In addition two students were paid for 20 hours of their time to conduct an evaluation, undertaking 'before' and 'after' interviews with both potential students and others involved. The evaluation showed that approaching and working with potential students at the sixth form stage is too late, as people have already made up their mind whether to enter HE or not. These findings will feed into widening participation activities at the College beyond the History Department and, perhaps as importantly, the project has served to involve the History Department directly in the College's widening participation work.

There is a more marked emphasis on accessibility issues than is common in other institutions, with projects focussing on, for example:

- support for students with mental health difficulties
- support for home based students
- supporting students on placements
- web-based diagnosis to help students with key skills
- use of conference server and web technology to promote student learning.

There is an annual timetable for advertising the availability of funds, providing support for bidders, allowing one month to bid and a further month before decisions are made, in early summer for the following academic year. Projects are funded from October to the following July. The decision to fund projects is taken by the Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation Group (LTSIG), membership of which includes student representation. Once funded, projects receive assistance from a member of the LTSIG to turn bids into workable plans. Staff from this group do not have a formal project co-ordination function but as most have now supported several projects their expertise in this role is developing. An interim report is required from each project plus a final report and financial statement, linked to a tight time scale for delivery.

In a relatively small institution, with projects in many departments, dissemination can be a more informal process. Undertaking these projects is a formative educational process and UCW feel that such engagements are more important in disseminating good practice than the formal project outcomes. Nevertheless project findings are disseminated through project seminars, a one-day conference to present many of the projects and a website which contains final reports. However most of the work of spreading and embedding the outcomes happens informally and through the impact the projects have had on increasing the status of developing teaching, and by making planned innovation a more mainstream activity. There is evidence of projects from one department subsequently being taken further in a new project in other areas, without any formal mechanism to achieve this.

#### **Web links for further information:**

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/LTMain/LTC/projects/index.html>

This site contains an invitation to bid, guidance to bidders and lists of projects with web links to further information about each.

#### **For more information contact:**

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## Case Study 8

# A learning and teaching strategy implemented through innovations projects

At the University of Central England the entire TQEF budget is allocated to funding teaching and learning development projects, and individuals and teams within faculties bid competitively for funds against criteria that require projects to address the University's strategic goals. The projects are much larger than in other institutions: up to £60,000 can be awarded. This leads faculties to select their project focus very carefully and develop sound plans and project teams. There is less emphasis on idiosyncratic individual interests and much more on strategic change to address faculty priorities. For example, the University strategy has as one of its goals to "Promote assessment procedures that support and reward a critical transformative approach to learning" and a funded project based in Computing is entitled "On line formative assessment" with a particular focus on evaluating the value of computer-based assessment in 'soft' subjects in a variety of modules.

Features of the initiative include:

- 'development days' for Project Directors with input from external experts
- the establishment of a 'Learning and Teaching Forum' chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) and attended by all Project Directors, all 'Fellowship' holders (a teaching award scheme) and members of the Directorate. It meets once a term and hears accounts of projects from their Directors and discusses development. Faculty Heads are invited so that they see what innovations are possible and think about how to take up and implement ideas developed elsewhere in the University. Typically discussions continue for an hour after the meetings end
- dissemination of accounts of progress on projects via a regular newsletter to all staff
- brief final project reports collated into a booklet and distributed to all teaching staff
- centrally managed independent evaluation of the impact of projects and of the initiative as a whole
- ad hoc follow-up projects that take very successful project outcomes and 'roll them out' to as many as 50 modules through workshops and consultancy support (for example, extending the use of a form of electronic student support designed to improve retention that started in a project on support of students on placement)
- unusually extensive involvement in the Post Graduate Certificate and Masters programmes on teaching and learning. Sixty staff were involved in 2002, over half of all teaching staff have now undertaken the Certificate programme and some entire departments have attended, including the Head of Department. This creates a critical mass of people engaged with the developing of teaching that makes it much easier to initiate and spread projects. The Masters programme supports small scale innovations
- Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees that involve, or are set up by those funded to undertake projects.

### Web links for further information:

<http://www.ssdd.uce.ac.uk>

## Section three:

# Issues in funding innovation and disseminating new teaching practices

### What is innovation?

29. What may appear to be an innovation to one teacher may seem conventional to others. Methods which some disciplines are beginning to experiment with have been 'traditional' in other disciplines for many years and this is true even across departments within a single institution. For example a heavy emphasis on project work, right from the start of a degree programme, and extensive use of professionals as teachers, is traditional in Architecture but would be radical in Construction Engineering, even though there is an overlap in curriculum content and the departments are often in the same faculty. And of course some institutions have a much more traditional and monochrome approach to teaching compared to others where there is, in contrast, an extraordinary diversity of approach. Ideas which seem radical or even appear totally impractical in some contexts are routine and seem unremarkable in others.

There is a tendency to believe that what is required is new methods, when what is really required is the translation of existing and well tried and tested methods from a different context where innovation is common. Being innovative may also involve adopting old methods. A few years ago McGill University was looking closely at Oxford University's tutorial approach as a way of increasing student centredness. This would have been a substantial innovation for McGill. What may appear like innovation to the individuals involved is often really a process of dissemination and adaptation. Treating a change in teaching as an invention is likely to waste time and effort and risk failure. While project funding may be an effective way to engage experienced and busy lecturers with change, this may still be primarily either a staff development exercise or involve organisational change.

This is not to underestimate the difficulties of adaptation from one context to another or the staff development challenges of teachers extending their competence and knowledge, but this should not be confused with discovery research or invention. It is probably rare for a funded innovation project to invent a new way of doing things that has not been tried before.

### Special innovation funding vs course re-design as a core duty

30. There is a sense in which special project funding for innovation is only required because innovation is not already an inherent component of the culture and because higher education institutions are inherently conservative and normative in their approach to teaching. It is also the case that time and duty allocation systems do not usually allocate teachers the time required to bring about change. The main use of innovation funding is to free teachers' time. Without special funding teachers may be allocated time for class contact or administration but rarely for writing a new course, let alone for developing a new approach to teaching. It seems to be assumed that lectures will be updated over the summer during time which does not appear in duty allocations, but it is unclear how the time could be found for major revisions. Some institutions, or more usually individual departments within institutions, use duty allocation systems that recognise the time requirements of producing new courses, by multiplying nominal hours on timetables by anything up to six for the first year of operation of a new course. The Open University has one time allocation system for those

involved in course production (where new courses may take many person years to produce), and another quite separate system for those involved in course delivery (involving tutor hours per course and per student). Most institutions do not allocate any time to course production. It is even more rare for an allocation of time to be made for introducing an innovation into an existing course. The main obstacle to teachers becoming more innovative is their lack of time and this is in large part a consequence of the way existing duty allocations systems operate.

Some departments, interviewed while the case material in this guide was being collected, reported that they found project funding disruptive. It took key staff away from teaching their own courses at short notice and separated innovation from normal teaching activity, especially where funded staff were seconded to central educational development units or cross-institution teams. In one instance a department took the departmental allocation of funding for innovation projects and used it to contribute to the total allocation available for teaching duties, so as to give staff time to innovate as part of their normal practice.

However many innovations require a step change and very considerable initial effort, based on the assumption that cost-benefits will be repaid over time. More time is required in the year before the innovation, or during the first year, than in subsequent years. The key issue for individual teachers is who gets the benefit of the initial investment of time. They need to be reassured that effort they put into innovation does not produce benefits for other teachers who are allocated to teach the course once the innovation is established, while they are moved to a new course that requires similar initial effort all over again. Persuading staff to commit time to innovation requires a broader approach to longer term issues of work allocation.

## Small vs large funds per project

31. The sums allocated to individual projects vary widely between institutions and schemes. The largest single allocation identified while collating the examples in this guide, using institutional funds for an internal project, was £2.9 million, while a number of institutions regularly allocated sums as small as £300.

Very large funding allocations are almost always for projects concerned with infrastructure that will be used by many teachers or by many students – for example a project to develop web-based study and guidance support for all students. They inevitably involve whole teams of staff, many of whom have not been withdrawn from teaching but who are employed specifically for the project. Even such very large projects may still involve competitive bidding to a committee. Very small allocations are usually for personal, almost private, innovation involving a modest component of a single module and a single teacher. In some contexts even sums for individual projects are relatively large. At the University of Durham, for example, projects are planned to involve a lecturer for half a day a week and are costed at £4,253 each. At other institutions such a sum would support a small team.

More commonly project funds may be allocated up to £2,000 or £5-10,000. The possible pros and cons of small and larger funding allocations are summarised in the grid overleaf:

Scale of funding per project	Pros	Cons
Small (<2k)	<p>Bids easier to write, leading to more bids, so possible to select the best ones to fund.</p> <p>More projects funded.</p> <p>More staff become involved.</p> <p>Modest scale release from teaching is easier to arrange.</p> <p>Less risk per project, and failures very low profile.</p> <p>Easy to undertake in parallel with ongoing teaching commitments.</p>	<p>Difficult to lever attention to anything other than personal goals.</p> <p>Hard to spend the money: not enough to buy time.</p> <p>Low status – such that in some contexts people will not apply.</p> <p>Innovation may be small scale, short duration and unsophisticated.</p> <p>Harder to support and monitor many small projects.</p> <p>Likely to be individuals working alone.</p> <p>Innovations may be very specific to a local context and hard to disseminate.</p> <p>Low visibility and little time or project funds for dissemination.</p>
Large (>£5k)	<p>Potential of larger sums allows leverage through specifying institutional agendas and criteria to be addressed.</p> <p>Higher status.</p> <p>Larger scale change over longer time periods.</p> <p>More likely to involve teams or collaboration across departments.</p> <p>Time for more sophistication, scholarship and especially dissemination.</p> <p>Easier to support and monitor fewer projects.</p>	<p>Harder to write bids and so fewer bids to choose from.</p> <p>Funding often used for research assistants or support staff so less staff development for teachers.</p> <p>Can be disruptive to teaching when staff are withdrawn for substantial periods.</p> <p>Riskier putting all funds into a few projects, and failures may be highly visible.</p> <p>Requires more accountability and monitoring.</p>

Overall smaller funding allocations may be best used to develop a culture of grass-roots innovation, to engage as many people as possible and to develop communities of practice. Larger funds may be best used to produce innovations targeted at institutional priorities with the potential for wider dissemination and adoption across departments beyond the context of the original innovation. It may not be very productive funding large projects until some of the culture has been developed and until an infrastructure to make the most of project outcomes is in place.

## Innovation vs embedding

32. There is a sense in which a teaching or assessment practice is only perceived as innovative if it is outside mainstream practice and different to the way most business is conducted. Once it is embedded in the everyday operation of courses and implemented by most teachers most of the time it ceases to be innovation. Yet such widespread take-up and use - the embedding in normal practice - is an ideal outcome of innovation. However there is a gulf between the lone innovator and embedded departmental practice that 'dissemination' alone will not bridge (see below). Problems include:

- innovations only being able to operate at the margins because they use resources (such as classrooms and computers) in such a non-standard way that if everyone emulated them the system would collapse. Most teaching operates within infrastructures that are designed to operate efficiently provided everything uses much the same pattern of operation. Widespread adoption of an innovation often requires fundamental changes in this infrastructure; in funding formulae, in assessment regulations, in the way teaching duties are allocated, in classroom allocations and timetables, and so on. Individual innovators working on a small scale can often get away with using new methods without changing this infrastructure. It is the role of Heads of Department, or departmental 'Teaching Co-ordinators' to spot these obstructions and address them if wider adoption of the innovation is considered worthwhile
- innovations being the pet idea of an individual. If the individual leaves or is even allocated to a different course, then the innovation dies
- innovations being narrowly conceived as only associated with a particular chunk of course content, rather than recognising the generic underlying educational process or principle that could be used in other topic areas, courses or even disciplines
- innovations being seen as a threat to deeply held values. For example teachers can respond to innovations such as peer assessment as if they were a threat to academic standards. Such reactions usually require examination of the underlying belief systems that have been encountered (for example that only teachers are capable of making judgements, that all students are inherently dishonest, or that if such roles can be filled by students then teachers will become redundant). It may take a good deal of open discussion to move on from such beliefs.

Embedding may require a further stage beyond innovation and dissemination. Typically one teacher innovates, perhaps for two or three years running, then two or three colleagues adopt a version of the innovation in other courses within the same programme. Finally, once a critical mass of credibility has been established, the department discusses whether everyone should adopt the same approach, or if structural changes or amendments to regulations should be made to accommodate the innovation. Only at that point does the innovation become secure and part of mainstream practice. Institutions and departments may pay little attention to this 'post-innovation' process and may lose the potential benefits. In contrast some institutions invest in embedding successful innovations.

## Autonomy vs managed project initiatives

33. Research Councils are moving away from allocating all funding to individual and idiosyncratic research projects to funding research programmes which are focussed and managed. Those funded might be expected to attend meetings at which all those involved in the same programme participate, and to report more regularly than in the past on progress and on links with other components of the programme. Similarly funding for teaching development, as it matures, tends to move away from simply 'handing out the cash' and leaving teachers to get on with it and instead manages the initiative. The following grid summarises some of the pros and cons of managed and unmanaged schemes:

Type of Scheme	Pros	Cons
'Hands off' autonomous projects	<p>More attractive to individuals to apply for funds.</p> <p>More freedom to experiment.</p> <p>Less bureaucracy and unproductive use of time.</p>	<p>'Scatter gun' approach and lack of focus.</p> <p>Greater risk of non-completion and failure through looser monitoring and lack of support.</p> <p>Lack of engagement with other staff – both for learning and dissemination.</p> <p>The whole may be less than the sum of the parts.</p>
Managed initiatives	<p>Projects can be focussed on strategic objectives, with the whole adding up to more than the sum of the parts.</p> <p>Learning across departmental boundaries.</p>	<p>Less personal benefit for those involved.</p> <p>Less likelihood of unexpected useful outcomes.</p> <p>Additional costs associated with management balanced against cost of non-completion.</p>

## Dissemination for awareness vs dissemination for use

34. It has become more common for the outcomes of funded innovation, or indeed any innovation, to be written up for in-house teaching newsletters or to be presented at in-house seminars or conferences. The first section of this guide identifies a range of such dissemination mechanisms. However most such mechanisms go little further than bringing the existence of innovations to the awareness of others. Some institutions produce very impressive catalogues of innovations but it is unclear if this makes it possible for anyone to adopt the innovations in their own context or even to understand what is involved. Dissemination often involves three stages:

- dissemination for awareness, in which teachers realise that there is an alternative to what they currently do. Short 'case study' descriptions and short presentations may achieve this (provided people read them or attend!)
- dissemination for understanding, in which teachers realise what is involved in the innovation, why it works, and the underlying general principles that would allow a judgement to be made about the suitability or adaptability of the innovation for their own context. This might be achieved by active involvement in a workshop about the innovation or a visit to the innovator, their classroom or their students
- dissemination for use, in which the teacher takes up the innovation and adapts it for use in their own teaching and course. This may require expert consultancy support over an extended period or perhaps membership of an interest group of others experimenting with the same innovation. Some innovations may also need new skills (such as how to conduct a problem based tutorial, or how to use software to produce web pages) that require training or at least guided and supported practice.

## Re-inventing the wheel

35. One of the innovation project reports we were provided with came from a research-led university and described a project concerned with developing the assessment of group work in Computer Science. Assessing group work is a topic that is fairly well documented in literature on teaching and learning, and particularly in the Computer Science discipline where project teams are a normal part of industry practice. In addition, the university where much of the most useful literature originates from is in a computer science department close to the research university concerned. The project report made no reference to any of this literature, or to the widespread and well developed practice at the neighbouring computer science department, or indeed to any existing practice or published guidance at all. In the context of the applicant's disciplinary research, this kind of ignorance of existing knowledge would not be tolerated, but in the context of teaching it is unfortunately normal. To some extent it is necessary for teachers to find their own way and they will probably learn quite a lot from re-inventing the wheel and making their own mistakes. In some contexts there are unique local features so that existing practice, or existing research findings about the practice, have limited applicability. However it is often the case that general principles, common problems and cunning solutions are all well documented, and ignoring this will greatly limit the potential for the progress of projects. It is not uncommon for innovation projects to stumble and fail simply because they are starting from scratch instead of building on what is already well established. Educational Development units can perform a useful service by pointing projects to existing literature and putting project staff in touch with others. Criteria for funding projects can oblige applicants to make an attempt to find out what is already known. For example, applicants for FTDL Phase 4 funding were required to ensure that their proposal was sited within the existing body of knowledge (HEFCE 01/60). The LTSN Generic Centre will, over time, be able to provide more advice to projects about who else is also developing practice in the same area but in different disciplines. When institutions disseminate the outcomes of projects they can help end-users by referring them to literature that provides a wider range of ideas and a clearer articulation of the issues than the particular example the project can provide.

## Time scales

36. It is very noticeable how in some institutions it is difficult to elicit enough bids for innovation projects to spend all their funding allocation, while in others it is highly competitive: for example only one bid in five is successful at the University of Central Lancashire. A lack of bids is sometimes argued to be a consequence of a research culture in which the sums are too small to interest Heads of Department or teachers and are also too low in status, particularly as they involve internal funding which does not contribute to the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). However there are also examples of healthy competition for innovation funding in strong research environments. For example only one in three bids can be funded at the University of Manchester. It seems likely that it takes several years for an innovations funding scheme to become established, recognised and accepted. Manchester had been funding their own scheme for some years before TQEF funding was available. Dissemination and publicity may take a few years to penetrate departments and the credibility of schemes may take a long time to establish. Where schemes are stable over a long period, with consistent annual deadlines for bids and well understood criteria and judging mechanisms, this may also help. Institutions that have only just begun to operate such a scheme may need to be patient and see it as a long term initiative.

## Who does the work?

37. Funding per project may be larger specifically to enable additional staff to be employed rather than to release teachers from a proportion of their duties. This may reduce the potential staff development benefits involved and limit 'capacity building', embedding and dissemination. The kind of development work that postgraduate teaching assistants may be capable of doing is often technical (such as mounting existing learning material on a website) rather than involving sophisticated professional judgement and experience. This affects the kinds of projects that are funded. In contrast, Queen's University Belfast, insists that applicants do the work themselves.

## Relationship to external funding

38. There are several potential sources of external funding for internal teaching developments, and the sums involved can be substantially greater for a single externally funded project than for the entire internal innovations fund. For example, some Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP) projects exceeded £1 million. FDTL projects are typically £250,000. 'Innovations' projects and projects associated with widening participation initiatives often exceed £100,000. The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and various European funds can be used to support developments in IT and also to undertake research and development projects to prove the viability of new technologies in teaching. Winning such large external projects may bring with it considerable status for an individual compared with a very modest internal grant – either in a research environment where external grant income is a crucial performance indicator, or in a small college where external grants are rare. Some internal innovations funds can be used to support bids for external funds (as at the University of Essex). Others have used successful internally funded projects as the basis for a much larger external bid. Sometimes the particular teaching strength identified in Subject Review that qualified a department to bid for FDTL funds, was itself developed through internal funding.

## Conclusion

39. The contexts, cultures and organisations within which innovation funds and dissemination activities operate are constantly changing. As they do so, the funding and dissemination mechanisms themselves may need to evolve. By examining the operation of schemes in other institutions that have been supporting innovation for longer, it may be possible to anticipate the kinds of evolution that will be required.

# Further Reading

Gibbs G. & Habeshaw T. (2002) **Recognising and Rewarding Excellent Teaching**. Open University: National Co-ordination Team for the TQEF.

Some innovation funds also reward those involved and this guide to good practice outlines the main mechanisms institutions use, with case studies and references.

Jefferies, A. & Jones, I. (2002) **A review of the institutional impact of recently appointed Teaching Fellows**. *Educational Developments*, 3,1, pp 8-9.

Anglia Polytechnic University funds innovation projects, the leaders of which are appointed as 'Teaching Fellows'. This article reviews the impact on the institution of having a group of past and present Teaching Fellows. The article highlights the value of increasing the visibility and credibility of efforts to improve teaching rather than focussing on outcomes of specific projects.

Lynch, B. (2001) **Innovative teaching in a higher education establishment – how extraordinary?** *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. 25,2, pp 175-194

An analysis of what innovation funding at the University of Durham has been used for, which raises questions about what is meant by 'innovation', and which emphasises the need for clear criteria.

Warren, R. & Plumb, E. (1999) **Survey of distinguished teacher award schemes in higher education**. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 23, 2, pp 245-255.

An analysis, undertaken through interviews and study of documentation, based on a selective survey of a range of award schemes, undertaken by University College London prior to establishing such a scheme within the College. The article highlights the most common features of, and distinguishes four types of, schemes, including educational grant schemes.

Wisker, G., Barnes, L. & Skinner, N. (2001) **Using research into student learning to underpin teaching**. Cambridge: Anglia Polytechnic University, Learning and Teaching Unit.

A good example of an in-house practical guide to several aspects of applied research into teaching. This guide supports the work of Teaching Fellows and other innovators at Anglia Polytechnic University who go beyond evaluating their projects and who undertake pedagogic research as a way of developing teaching.

Boyle, J.D. (1978) **Conservative innovation**. *Studies in Higher Education*, 3(1) pp 63-71.

One of a number of writers about the function of innovation within organisation, in this case asking whether most innovation in teaching in higher education involves tuning conservative pedagogies or whether a more radical type of innovation is required which challenges assumptions and traditions.

Cowan, J. (1998) **On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher**. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

This book focuses in individual teachers rather than on their organisational context, and emphasises the role of reflection, and what supports reflection, in fostering innovation, rather than seeing it simply as a mechanical 'project'.

Hannan, A. & Silver, S. (2000) **Innovating in Higher Education. Teaching, Learning and Institutional Cultures**. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

This book is based on interviews and qualitative research in 15 UK universities. It arose out of the 'Partnership Awards' scheme involving national prizes for innovation, exploring why some staff innovate and why some innovations take hold and others do not. Its analysis of what inhibits innovation and what promotes innovation, and particularly its analysis of the impact of institutional cultures, provides a valuable background for those designing and implementing innovation funds.

### See also:

Hannan, A., English, S. & Silver, H. (1999) **Why innovate? Some preliminary findings from a research project on 'Innovations in teaching and learning in higher education'**. Studies in Higher Education, 24(3) pp 279-289

Silver, H. (1999) **Managing to innovate in higher education**. British Journal of Educational Studies, 47(2) pp 145-156.

Taylor, P.G. (1998) **Institutional change in uncertain times: lone ranging is not enough**. Studies in Higher Education, 23(3), pp 269-279.

Taylor argues that the lone innovator cannot bring about the scale or type of change that institutions need, and this has implications for the organisation and support of innovation funds.



