

Social policy and social work subject centre, higher education academy

Supporting learning and teaching

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Editorial

Thank you for picking up the spring issue of the SWAP newsletter and we hope we can entice you to read through the round up of news, events and features contained in these pages.

We cover the 2005-6 call for SWAP funded projects with a deadline of 21st March and there is still time to get in your bid. We carry news on the successful bids for Centres of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELTs); articles relating to mental health and the 'Ten Essential Shared Capabilities'; Elearning global welfare; the use of outside speakers on degree courses and the impact on higher education of the Disability Discrimination Act.

We hope you like our new newsletter design and we will be going live with our new look website later this spring. This partial rebranding is part of the transition into the Higher Education Academy's look and feel but we think you will still recognise us as SWAP. We have just been through a subject centre review and we bring you the results of that exercise in this issue.

We have a full programme of work over the next few months. To give you a taste: we are pleased to have received funding from JISC via the Higher Education Academy for a three stranded work package. We are engaging with the personal development plans (PDP) agenda, as well as running a workshop on social

work admissions and a separate event on spirituality, religion and the social work curriculum. www.swap.ac.uk has the online booking forms. We will be publishing the results of a joint project with the Social Policy Association and JUC-SPC on employability. I can't finish without a plug for the Effective Learning and Teaching in Social Policy and Social Work book, published at the end of November by RoutledgeFalmer. This book is edited by Hilary Burgess and Imogen Taylor with contributions from members of the SWAP team and social work and social policy colleagues.

Come and say hello to us whether face to face at conferences or other events, or by email, through the website or telephone. Let us know what you like or don't like about what we do and whether our activities really do support you and through you enhance your students' experiences of learning and teaching. Our contact details are on the SWAP website. If you're not sure who to contact email us on swap@swap.ac.uk

Jackie Rafferty
Director

www.swap.ac.uk

We are redesigning the website to incorporate the new Higher Education Academy look. This is a major undertaking and hope that you will give us feedback if you find it useful or difficult to use.

Disability Discrimination Act, 1995: Code of Practice, Trade Organisations and Qualifications Bodies

Bob Sapey, Lancaster University

Part 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 (DDA) makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person in relation to either staff recruitment or retention. Part 4 of the DDA, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001 (SENDA), also makes it illegal for education institutions to discriminate against disabled students. The provision and arrangements for compulsory work placements, which are an integral part of many professional courses, are covered by this legislation.

Discrimination can occur either when a responsible body treats a disabled person less favourably on grounds of their disability than they would treat a non-disabled person, or when a responsible body fails to make a reasonable adjustment so that a disabled student is placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person.

Since October 2004, the DDA 1995 (Amendment) Regulations, 2003 has placed responsibilities on qualifications bodies not to discriminate against disabled people. This covers:

- the arrangements it makes for the purpose of determining upon whom to confer a professional or trade qualification, or
- ... the terms on which it is prepared to confer such a qualification, or
- ... refusing or deliberately omitting to grant any application by him for a professional or trade qualification, or
- ... withdrawing such a qualification from him or varying the terms on which he holds it.

(Disability Rights Commission, 2004, para. 3.19)

One of the keys to whether a qualifications body is acting legally is whether in making decisions, it is applying competence standards that are necessary for a person to have achieved in order to qualify for that occupation. Hence the Code of Practice discusses the meaning and application of competence standards at length. Section 14A(5) of the DDA defines a competence standard as 'an academic, medical or other standard applied by or on behalf of a qualifications body for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability'. However, it is necessary to distinguish between the application of a standard and the process by which it is applied, so for example the Code suggests it is perfectly legitimate for a foreign language interpreter to be expected to undertake an oral examination, but it would be illegal not to permit a person with dyslexia to have additional time within a written examination, that would be a reasonable adjustment.

In respect of the application of the standard itself, this is only likely to be illegal if the qualifications body cannot show that the standard is applied equally to others and that 'its application is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim' (para 8.36). The DRC give an example of someone who fails a fitness test which is applied to all other applicants, but which is not consistently applied after people have joined that profession, thereby demonstrating that it is not proportionate.

These rules are important within many human services professions, particularly where stereotypical assumptions are made about the impact of particular impairments on a person's ability to undertake certain tasks. Social work tutors and practice assessors now assess students' ability in relation to the national occupational standards and will have to ensure they do so within the guidance of this Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice (Para. 8.41) states that if qualifications bodies are to avoid discrimination, they need to show two things:

First, it will have to show that the application of the standard does not amount to direct discrimination. Second, it will be necessary to show that the standard can be objectively justified.

The DRC go on to argue that 'this is more likely to be possible where a qualifications body has considered the nature and effects of its competence standards in advance of an issue arising in practice' (emphasis added para 8.41). The DRC advises on a review and evaluation of such standards including:

- Identifying the specific purpose of each competence standard which is applied, and examining the manner in which the standard achieves that purpose.
- Considering the impact which each competence standard may have on disabled people and, in the case of a standard which may have an adverse impact, asking whether the application of the standard is absolutely necessary.
- Reviewing the purpose and effect of each competence standard in the light of changing circumstances, such as developments in technology.
- Examining whether the purpose for which any competence standard is applied could be achieved in a way which does not have an adverse impact on disabled people, and
- Documenting the manner in which these issues have been addressed, the conclusions which have been arrived at, and the reasons for those conclusions.

References

Disability Rights Commission (2004) *Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Code of Practice, Trade Organisations and Qualifications Bodies*. [<http://www.drc.org.uk>]



**Social Policy
and Social Work
(SWAP)**

New funded projects (2005-06)

SWAP is encouraging bids in two areas of work:

- a) pedagogical research
- b) innovative projects

Bids should match our strategy areas, as identified as priorities for our subject communities namely:

- Curriculum design, development and assessment
- Research and scholarship in learning and teaching
- Widening participation: recruitment, retention and employability

Particular themes are listed in the guidance notes

Closing date: Monday 21st March 2005

Band A: Exceptional proposals up to £8,000

Band B: Proposals for between £3,000 and £5,000

Funds are allocated on the basis of a competitive bidding process and will have a year duration

For further information - www.swap.ac.uk/about/projects05.asp

Contact: Mary Locke
M.Locke@swap.ac.uk
Tel: 023 8059 7782

Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs)

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) have funded 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) to promote excellence across all subjects and aspects of teaching and learning in higher education. There are many which have generic interest to social work and social policy, however, the following CETLs are, in SWAP's view, the most relevant.



The full list is available at:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/tinits/cetl/final/>

CRUCiBLE: Centre for Rights Understanding and Citizenship Based on Learning through Experience - Roehampton University

This CETL will enhance student learning through an active engagement with the world in dealing with issues of human rights, social justice and citizenship. The title reflects the role of CRUCiBLE both as a forum for bringing together diverse partners and as a catalyst for real change within higher education. They will make use of their existing expertise and experience in building partnerships between human rights organisations and universities to construct programmes and learning resource materials as well as providing opportunities for student placements. CRUCiBLE expertise, networks, resources and facilities will be made available to other universities.

Main Contact: David Woodman email: d.woodman@roehampton.ac.uk

Centre for Promoting Learner Autonomy - Sheffield Hallam University

The centre builds on work in several subject disciplines which have developed significant ways of promoting students as autonomous learners through transformative models of autonomy. They draw on innovative pedagogies, learning processes, learning environments. The centre promotes learning through diverse activities including peer tutoring, student-led conferences, student-led assessment, simulations, internationalising student activity. They bring these together and create new opportunities for learning particularly through digital media. Students will have the opportunity to engage with other students nationally and internationally through partner arrangements already developed by centre staff including work with the Higher Education Academy.

Main Contact: Professor Anthony Rosie Email: A.J.Rosie@shu.ac.uk

Centre for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning in Mental Health - University of Birmingham

This CETL will develop a dynamic and collaborative partnership between six schools in the university and the mental health service user, practice and policy communities. Through this partnership it will enhance and expand the delivery and evaluation of innovative, interdisciplinary mental health programmes within higher education and the mental health sector. Service user and carer involvement as well as e-learning will be key features of programme development and evaluation. The CETL will actively contribute to the promotion of best practice in supporting students with mental health problems access and complete programmes of academic study.

Main Contact: Professor Ann Davis Email: a.davis@bham.ac.uk

Continued from page 4

Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Mental Health and Social Work
- Middlesex University

The centre will enhance teaching quality by:

- continuing to develop innovative programmes of learning for practice
- establishing a core capability-based curriculum, adaptable to mental health and social work, that allows workers to learn together and work together
- delivering that curriculum in the workplace via team teaching and mentoring
- devising strategies for student support that enhance retention and progression
- ensuring that other learners beyond mental health and social work professionals are influenced by the CETL's teachers to raise their own thresholds of performance in academic work and in practice.

Main Contact: Professor Peter Ryan Email: p.ryan@mdx.ac.uk

Placement Learning in Health and Social Care - University of Plymouth

The CETL for Placement Learning in Health and Social Care aims to enhance health and social care students' practice/placement learning. Various strands of development work relating to placement learning and teaching are planned: preparing and training staff, supporting students with disabilities, evaluating learning assessment tools, evaluating interprofessional learning opportunities, auditing and enhancing the learning context, and the role of OSCEs. Building on existing excellence, the CETL also aims to develop new multi-professional placement opportunities at the cutting edge of service in the South West including working with refugees and asylum seekers, prisoners, homeless people and carers.

Main Contact: Susan Lea Email: susan.lea@plymouth.ac.uk

Centre for Excellence in Inter Professional Learning in the Public Sector (CETL:IPPS)
- University of Southampton

This CETL builds on the university's commitment to developing and supporting the public sector workforce. Based on their extensive experience of integrating interprofessional learning into health and social care programmes the CETL will encompass education. They will develop group-based interprofessional learning opportunities for students from these services to prepare them for the team based working in the changing world of public services. An interprofessional 'Learning Hub' as part of the library will provide students with an environment and resources supportive of their needs. The Learning Hub will also make available resources to other institutions.

Main Contact: Professor Debra Humphris Email: d.humphris@soton.ac.uk

Centre for Stakeholder Learning Partnerships: Engaging the Wider Faculty, Realising the Wider Campus - University of Central England in Birmingham

This CETL will create and evaluate a model of learning partnership between a university and health and social care sector employers. Working initially with Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Trust they will build a learning organisation that is responsive to emerging educational needs. They will create and test innovative methods of learning and secure a more seamless flow of support, resources and staff. The opportunities for staff and students in both organisations to learn from the work of others will result in dynamic curricula that enhance student learning experiences.

Main Contact: Stuart Brand Email: stuart.brand@uce.ac.uk

Continued

Access to Practice:

Overcoming the barriers to practice learning for disabled social work students.

Although copies were sent to every UK HE we had an overwhelming request for more and have now printed further a second run. Contact Mary Locke at m.locke@swap.ac.uk

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Centre for Inter-Professional e-Learning (CIPeL) in Health and Social Care

- *Coventry University*

CIPeL will develop and disseminate solutions to barriers that hinder integration of inter-professional learning within health and social care education. Innovative 'e-approaches' will enable students to engage in collaborative exploration of specially designed resources, shared through the CIPeL's web portal. CIPeL will be a beacon of best practice, promoting inter-professional e-learning nationally and internationally, and will build on innovative developments in both universities, such as web-based patient journeys, multimedia accounts of patient/client experience and virtual learning groups. CIPeL will provide scalable solutions that enable students to learn with, from and about each other, while enhancing their preparation for the collaborative, partnership working which underpins modern health and social care.

Main Contact: Anne Davidson Email: a.davidson@coventry.ac.uk

Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences (CILASS)

- *University of Sheffield*

CILASS will achieve a step-change in the nature and quality of student learning, by embedding discipline-sensitive inquiry-based learning at the heart of this experience. The explicit combination of collaborative inquiry, information literacy development and networked learning gives CILASS its truly distinctive flavour. CILASS will develop a vibrant multi-disciplinary community of practice; involving and enthusing students and staff, sharing excellent and innovative practice, experimenting with physical and virtual learning environments, and contributing to pedagogical understanding of inquiry. Within the university's flagship learning resource centre, CILASS will create inspirational space purpose-built to support collaborative, inquiry-based learning in an information- and technology-rich environment.

Main Contact: Louise Thorpe Email: l.thorpe@sheffield.ac.uk

Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Reusable Learning Objects

- *London Metropolitan University*

The CETL will develop a range of multimedia learning objects that can be stored in repositories, accessed over the web, and integrated into course delivery. It will extend the work of the partners in establishing effective methods for the design, development and delivery of reusable learning objects. There will be a strong programme of embedding and evaluation in a range of subject areas, from Nursing through to Computing, supported by a bold staff development programme. The CETL will also contribute actively to research on the pedagogical and organisational issues in using learning objects to achieve real educational impact.

Main Contact: Professor Tom Boyle Email: t.boyle@londonmet.ac.uk

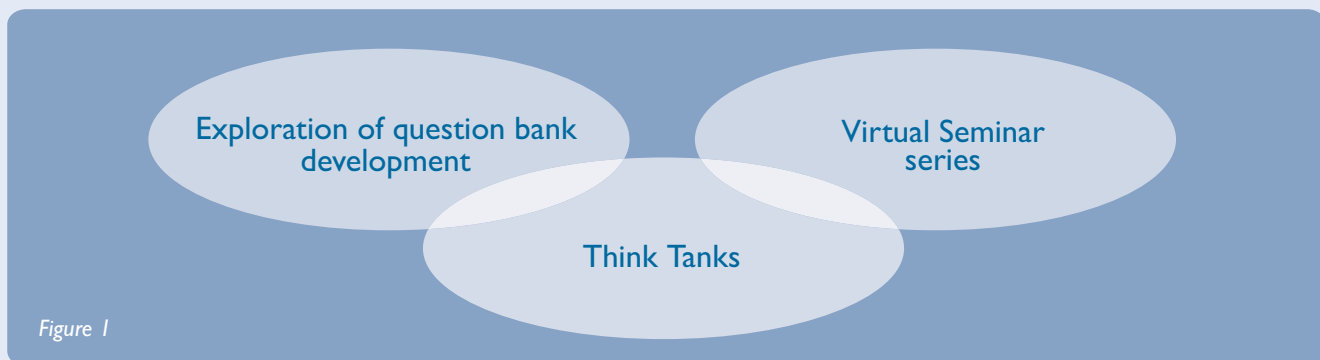
Higher Education Academy removes annual fee for practitioners

The Higher Education Academy is removing the annual renewal fee for Registered Practitioners (previously known as Institute of Learning and Teaching). Continuing registration will be dependant on practitioners' commitment to their own professional development. Removing the annual fee will enable a more inclusive approach to developing the community of registered practitioners and demonstrates the Academy's commitment to support all staff engaged in supporting student learning.

E-learning monies for social policy and social work

SWAP has received the go ahead for a project which will be funded by monies from the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), through the Higher Education Academy. We will be undertaking a programme of e-learning development work to promote the use of shareable resources and tools. SWAP will be working with the social policy and social work higher education community to develop and deliver this programme of work, based upon three distinct but complementary strands of activity.

- Two 24- hour elearning think tanks to support the establishment of an e-learning interest and reference group
- Exploration of question bank development
- A Virtual Seminar Series



As Figure 1 shows the think tanks will support the other two activities but each of the three is discrete.

1. Two 24- hour E-learning Think Tanks

At the Joint Social Work Education Conference in July 2004 a group of educators with an interest in e-learning expressed a wish to form an interest group to explore and discuss e-learning related issues. SWAP brought together many of this group of educators and others in December 2004 as part of a consultation on e-content development for social work education undertaken for the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). Those who attended wanted to continue networking and developing their ideas and the JISC funding provides an opportunity to do this and to extend the work and membership of this interest group to social policy academics. We will be bringing together social policy and social work e-learning champions for two 24-hour residential events:

These events will use the group's knowledge and experience to develop ideas for:

- supporting SWAP in the delivery of the question bank and virtual seminar series activities
- providing a peer-led voice to support wider change in virtual social policy and social work education
- promoting and enabling development of shareable resources for the discipline (eg. workshops, departmental presentations, 'expert' contributions, articles).

2. Exploration of question bank development

Work on question banks for the SWAP subject community has been relatively limited, unlike some other disciplines. In part this appears to be due to some academics not perceiving such resources as suitable for use in assessment. SWAP has collaborated previously with Bob Rotheram, a social policy academic who was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship to develop question banks for social policy academics. The lessons learned from this initiative, and others that may be identified, will be used as the basis to explore other ways of developing shareable content by subject experts.

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3. Virtual Seminar Series

Many students, academics and practitioners do not have the opportunity to attend national or international conferences and therefore miss the opportunity to learn from leading edge speakers. The aim of the virtual seminar series is to support wider sharing of subject expertise. We propose to undertake a pilot exercise in developing a virtual seminar series, using the emergence of an international social work curriculum and comparative social policy as the thematic focus. This strand of the work links to the World Universities' Network which has 15 members

- 6 in England
- 2 in Norway
- 5 in USA
- 1 in Netherlands
- 2 in China.

The activity will involve:

- Establishing collaboration with other WUN universities and named individuals to be project partners
- Identifying topic titles and possible speakers for seminars through consultation with the constituency
- Developing a timetable for the series; Autumn 2005 or Spring 2006
- Developing a strategy for participation in the seminars, for example participants could apply to attend a seminar at a host institution
- Developing a website to support the series, which will include speaker details, details of how to participate, any handouts or powerpoint presentations associated with the seminars, video streaming of each presentation
- Developing an evaluation and dissemination strategy for the activity.

If you are interested in working with us on any of the above please contact Julia Waldman: j.waldman@swap.ac.uk

SWAP Workshops

18th April 2005

Social Work Admissions: Sharing issues: developing good practice
Bamber House, University of Sussex

Full details available from <http://www.swap.ac.uk/events/workshop.asp?ref=972>

28th April 2005

Spirituality, religion and the social work curriculum: the neglected dimension?

Staffordshire University

Full details available from <http://www.swap.ac.uk/events/workshop.asp?ref=980>

Or contact Mary Locke on 02380 597782 for further details



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

Social Policy Association 38th Annual Conference
Well-being and Social Justice
The University of Bath
27th -29th June

The 2005 Social Policy Association conference will be held at the
University of Bath from 27-29 June.

Plenary speakers will include:

Gösta Esping-Anderson, Ian Gough, John Hills, Nic Marks, Polly Toynbee, Fiona Williams

This year's theme 'Well-being and Social Justice' has the following sub-themes:

- 1) Childhood and the life course
- 2) Crime and criminal justice processes
- 3) Economic security: poverty and social inequalities
- 4) Education and learning
- 5) Environment/housing/community
- 6) Family and family policy
- 7) Health and social care
- 8) Labour market/ work as welfare/corporate citizenship
- 9) Theorising well-being: defining, measuring and understanding
- 10) Understanding agency and promoting voice

The conference programme includes an evening reception at the famous Roman Baths and a Conference Dinner in the Banqueting Rooms at the Guildhall.

For further details and booking information:

SPA 2005 Conference Office, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath
Bath BA2 7AY

Email: spa2005@bath.ac.uk
Telephone: + 44 (0) 1225 383529
Fax: + 44 (0) 1225 826381
Website: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/soc-pol/spa2005>

Developing the Ten Essential Shared Capabilities

Jill Anderson

A new document, *The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities: a Framework for the whole of the Mental Health Workforce*, is intended to make explicit what should be included as core in the curricula of all pre- and post-qualification training for professional and non-professionally affiliated staff, as well as embedded in induction and continuing professional/practitioner development. Developed in consultation with service users, carers, managers, academics and practitioners, the *Essential Shared Capabilities (ESC)* have an explicit focus on the needs of service users and of carers.

The framework has been devised by the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMHE)/Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health Joint Workforce Support Unit and will be implemented in England in collaboration with a range of partners. The Mental Health in Higher Education project (mhhe) has been working alongside some of the NIMHE regional development centres to deliver workshops based around the Essential Shared Capabilities. Regional workshops will continue over the coming months and social work educators have a key role to play in these.

The Essential Shared Capabilities can be seen to be relevant not only to education and training in mental health but across the social work curriculum. Importantly, this document - with its emphasis on shared capabilities - provides a focus for the development of interprofessional learning in the area of mental health.

The challenge for social work educators is two-fold: first, to ensure that all learning about mental health takes account of these ten key areas; and secondly, and arguably most importantly, to ensure that mental health has a high profile on programmes and that all learning is underpinned by an understanding of mental wellbeing and ill-health throughout the lifecycle.



User and carer involvement in social work education can be seen to be central to achievement of both aims. “Learning from Experience: involving service users and carers in mental health education and training” has recently been produced by the Mental Health in Higher Education project in partnership with NIMHE West Midlands and Trent Workforce Development Confederation. This good practice guide considers the arguments for involving service users and carers in mental health education, contains a general introduction to the components of effective involvement and provides many detailed suggestions to help programmes to move forward. A range of examples is given of current practice in user and carer involvement from across a range of disciplines.

The Essential Shared Capabilities: a framework for the whole of the mental health workforce and Learning from Experience can both be downloaded from the homepage of the mhhe website: www.mhhe.ltsn.ac.uk

External examiners register

Are you registered on our database as a potential or existing external examiner?

Keep up to date by registering with us on development opportunities, information of changing policy and guidance and relevant events. This is growing weekly and additionally we are pleased to help the community by advising programmes of potential examiners.

The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities:

A framework for the whole of the mental health workforce

- 1** Working in Partnership. Developing and maintaining constructive working relationships with service users, carers, families, colleagues, lay people and wider community networks. Working positively with any tensions created by conflicts of interest or aspiration that may arise between the partners in care.
- 2** Respecting Diversity. Working in partnership with service users, carers, families and colleagues to provide care and interventions that not only make a positive difference but also do so in ways that respect and value diversity including age, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality.
- 3** Practising Ethically. Recognising the rights and aspirations of service users and their families, acknowledging power differentials and minimising them whenever possible. Providing treatment and care that is accountable to service users and carers within the boundaries prescribed by national (professional), legal and local codes of ethical practice.
- 4** Challenging Inequality. Addressing the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion on service users, carers and mental health services. Creating, developing or maintaining valued social roles for people in the communities they come from.
- 5** Promoting Recovery. Working in partnership to provide care and treatment that enables service users and carers to tackle mental health problems with hope and optimism and to work towards a valued lifestyle within and beyond the limits of any mental health problem.
- 6** Identifying People's Needs and Strengths. Working in partnership to gather information to agree health and social care needs in the context of the preferred lifestyle and aspirations of service users their families, carers and friends.
- 7** Providing Service User Centred Care. Negotiating achievable and meaningful goals; primarily from the perspective of service users and their families. Influencing and seeking the means to achieve these goals and clarifying the responsibilities of the people who will provide any help that is needed, including systematically evaluating outcomes and achievements.
- 8** Making a Difference. Facilitating access to and delivering the best quality, evidence-based, values based health and social care interventions to meet the needs and aspirations of service users and their families and carers.
- 9** Promoting Safety and Positive Risk Taking. Empowering the person to decide the level of risk they are prepared to take with their health and safety. This includes working with the tension between promoting safety and positive risk taking, including assessing and dealing with possible risks for service users, carers, family members, and the wider public.
- 10** Personal Development and Learning. Keeping up-to-date with changes in practice and participating in life-long learning, personal and professional development for one's self and colleagues through supervision, appraisal and reflective practice.

Subject Centre Review - SWAP remains SWAP

Jackie Rafferty

We have come through the review highlighted in Issue 7's editorial and the University of Southampton has been offered funding to continue hosting SWAP until July 2009 with probable support beyond.

SWAP was set up as part of the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) in 2000 for three years and that was extended to five years. We are now part of the Higher Education Academy following the merger of the LTSN, the Institute for Learning and Teaching and the National Co-ordination Team in May 2004.

As part of the transition SWAP, alongside the subject centres for Health Sciences and Practice and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine were reviewed to see if the health and social work centres should be reconfigured. Four models were considered:

1. Status quo
2. Full merger
3. Federation
4. Partial merger.

The final recommendation which has now been accepted was SWAP staying as a separate Centre for Social Policy and Social Work and a loose federal structure for the other two centres, Health Sciences and Practice and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine with encouragement for a greater degree

of collaborative working. We look forward to continue working with our colleagues in these two subject centres but equally we are expanding our collaborative working with colleagues in the subject centres for Education (ESCalate), Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) and Psychology.

The review committee was chaired by Janet Finch, and we are very grateful to her and the other members of the committee but particularly for the time, expertise and words of wisdom of Ann Davis, Nick Ellison, Anne Mercer and Joan Orme who were our nominees. A Delphi survey was also carried out and again thank you to all those who responded; to our steering group and to the SWAP team. Apologies for sounding like the BritAwards but the review entailed a great deal of effort by a lot of people.

As though that were not enough we are about to enter our own review as we need to take stock of where we are and what impact we have had. We need to reflect on where the priorities lie for our subject communities in the quickly changing landscape of higher education and what being part of the Higher Education Academy means in terms of what we do and how we do it.

The review of all 24 subject centres is now complete and only one centre is subject to a new tender. It is reassuring to see familiar territory in the tender document. But the context has changed. Our strapline in LTSN was 'enhancing learning and teaching' in the Higher Education Academy it is now framed as 'enhancing the student experience in UK higher education'. The initial strategic aims and objectives of the Academy are set out at www.heacademy.ac.uk and subject centres are expected to work within the context of these broad aims.

Effective Learning and Teaching in Social Policy and Social Work

Newly published by RoutledgeFalmer, this book is edited by Hilary Burgess and Imogen Taylor and includes contributions from other members of the SWAP team, as well as a range of educators from both social policy and social work. It aims to provide an accessible text covering the core concerns critical to educators. Less experienced teachers looking for guidance will find this title indispensable, as will more experienced educators seeking material for critical reflection and innovative teaching practice.

Price £24.99 www.routledgefalmer.com email: book.orders@tandf.co.uk

The advantages and disadvantages of using outside speakers on a degree programme

Peter Scourfield, Anglia Polytechnic University

This article is about the use of outside speakers and stems from developing a new module, 'People on the Margin', on our BA Social Policy. It seeks to disentangle and analyse the policies and practices that have emerged around the single homeless, who often experience multiple problems and as a consequence have often found themselves outside of, or falling through, mainstream welfare systems. A major part of the module's focus is unravelling the many interrelated problems experienced by rough sleepers, eg. mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, and problems of adjustment having left different types of institution.

Equally important was identifying and then examining the various policy responses from government. Broadly, this is the social inclusion agenda. However, because of some of the behavioural and lifestyle characteristics of the group in question, eg. street drinking, begging, dealing and taking drugs in public spaces, the module also addressed a set of issues that could be more appropriately linked to the anti-social behaviour agenda. This, to put it very crudely, highlighted potentially clashing policy agendas; social inclusion which emphasises outreach, rehabilitation and resettlement, and anti-social behaviour which emphasises dispersal and elimination.

I decided that it would be interesting to give most of the lecture input over to outside speakers who worked in the field, either at policy or practitioner level. I persuaded representatives from the local authority housing department, voluntary agencies, drug and alcohol services, the NHS, the police and assertive outreach teams to come and talk about what their understanding of the problem was, what policies informed their work and how well those policies were being implemented in practice. To 'externalise' 80% of a module is potentially a high-risk strategy. I delivered the first two lectures myself where I set out the wider context and introduced a range of themes that would provide a coherent framework in which the speakers could be situated. The students were encouraged to pay particular attention to the each speaker's use of language. Primarily this enabled them to locate the speaker

within a particular policy discourse and also to understand the constitutive power of agency practices.

To ensure that using speakers was effective I:

1. went to see them to explain the overall point of the module and what it was hoping to achieve;
2. assessed whether they would be able to talk to the group of students at the appropriate level and gave advice where necessary;
3. conducted a brief visualisation with them - of the environment and of the student group - this helped to deal with anxiety and ensured that the speaker considered how best to deliver their talk;
4. always made a follow up contact to find out what they were going to say and how they are going to deliver it, eg. handouts, visual aids etc. and to give advice on good presentation;
5. agreed that the session would have plenty of time for 'question and answer' as this was often the most productive part.

The advantages of outside speakers are that they:

- a. are specialists in their field and are a source of relevant contacts and references;
- b. can highlight issues, tensions and dilemmas that arise from putting policy into practice;
- c. can reveal issues derived from 'lived experience' which are not necessarily covered in academic literature;
- d. can bring out differences between different agency perspectives and provide insights into 'joined up' working;
- e. have de facto credibility with students.

The disadvantages are that:

- a. they may not be effective communicators in the classroom;
- b. practitioners may not be fully aware of the policy context in which they operate and occasionally they may not be able to make an informed comment in response to questions;
- c. multiple speakers may overlap too much with each other;
- d. if they're late or cancel, this leaves a large void to fill;
- e. addressing all of the above requires a lot of time and effort.

Using so many outside speakers was very time consuming. However, the time and 'emotional labour' spent engaging and 'nurturing' the speakers paid off because it allowed us to explore the realities of 'joined up' working through the 'lived experiences' of those involved. It was also effective in uncovering the different (sometimes contradictory) discourses that interplay with each other in this particular field of study. It provided interesting insights into how each agency constructed its subjects. Lastly, it reminded us that social policy is about people and, for this reason alone, was worth doing.

Preparation for Practice at the University of Reading, BA in Social Work

Debbie Mackay and Linda Ward, University of Reading

With the advent of the ‘new’ degree in Social Work in 2003, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and the Department of Health (DH) put forward clear expectations and guidance on how students should be prepared for direct practice. These included that social work students would develop a greater understanding of the experiences of service users, that they would be required to meet the National Occupational Standards for social work, and that they would have the opportunity to shadow an experienced social worker in practice. In addition communication, problem solving and team work were identified as key skills that students had to demonstrate and develop throughout their training.

University of Reading students undertake a period of assessed practice in all three years of the degree and would all be assessed by qualified and accredited practice teachers. As practice teachers ourselves, we feel that it is imperative that we have the opportunity to assess students in practice throughout their training, whilst also giving them the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge, skills and values they are being taught in the classroom.

Our interpretation of the guidance led us to develop two modules within part one of the degree and passing these was a pre-requisite for students starting their first period of assessed practice. One of these modules was an introduction to law, and the other, ‘Preparation for Practice 1’ is the discussed here. This is a two term module with two summative and one formative assessments.

Module Content

Term 1 focuses on the role and function of social work, and the relationship with the service user.

We cover:

- What is Social Work? This places social work tasks within the sociological and psychological continuum.
- Values – personal and professional, relating these

to the GSCC Codes of Practice.

- Working with Difference – an introduction to anti oppressive practice, and recognising the needs of service users as individuals.
- Preparing for and interviewing service users on their experiences of the services they that they have used.
- Five days shadowing of an experienced social worker for ALL students. Students must produce an account of this experience for the summative assignment, placing the agency’s work within the sociological and psychological continuum.

Term 2 focuses on Key Social Work Skills: communication, problem solving and team work including:

- Communication Project
- Confidentiality
- Report Writing
- Professional Boundaries and Safe Practice
- Supervision
- National Occupational Standards.

Teaching Methods

This module is taught jointly by the authors, and is delivered using a combination of direct teaching, small group work, and task-centred learning sets. The latter uses a problem solving approach to the Interviewing of service users in term 1, and the Communication Project in term 2.

Interviewing Service Users

The development of an active Citizens Forum within the school helped us to identify a number of local organisations* whose members were keen to be involved in the development of the degree. Their priority was that students should develop genuine respect and honesty in their interactions with service users.

The students are given the responsibility of planning the interview, the setting, and the comfort of the service users. Both service users and students have the opportunity to give and receive feedback following the session. Students produce a summative assignment, which requires them to examine a particular service from the perspective of its users.

Throughout the module we have created opportunities for students to look at communication at both micro and macro level: face to face interviewing skills, report writing and working within organisations. Each learning set also produces a formative assignment of a written log of the work undertaken, identifying decision making processes and problem solving methods.

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Evaluation

The GSCC and DH requirements led us to develop a module that has exceeded our initial expectations. Having seen our first cohort of degree students complete their first year, we were able to evaluate outcomes through their assignments and their completed placement portfolios. It was evident that despite their inexperience, students were actively

applying communication theories and empowerment in their direct work with service users. Feedback from placement agencies was also positive despite initial reservations about this 'new breed' of social work students. It would seem that we had prepared them well, and we look forward to building on our experience with this year's new intake.

* Reading Children's Rights, Reading Speaking Up Group, Reading Resource, Carer users.

E-Learning Global Welfare

Nicola Yeates and Zoe Irving, ICSP co-convenors

The International and Comparative Social Policy special interest group has secured funding from the Subject Network for Sociology, Anthropology, Politics (C-SAP), part of the Higher Education Academy, and from the Globalism and Social Policy Programme to support the group's 'E-Learning Global Welfare' project over 2004-05. The project is also supported by Sheffield University, Queen's University Belfast and SWAP.

The project aims to facilitate the development of learning and teaching resources in global welfare studies, an area distinctive due to its topicality, universal relevance and dynamism, and presents a focus for the productive input of a range of educational practitioners and students.

The Web has clearly been of huge benefit in relation to the study of global welfare, most specifically in allowing access to material made available by a vast array of governmental and non-governmental organisations. However, the development of knowledge and understanding of global welfare policy can often be hampered by its comprehensiveness and limited by people's unfamiliarity with these sources and uses of information.

By developing e-resources which can address a significant frustration experienced by students (and lecturers) of global welfare i.e. the difficulty in identifying, locating, accessing and making effective use of relevant and up-to-date sources of information, specific documents and statistical data, the project will contribute to the promotion of global welfare studies within social policy and cognate fields. We will be developing a subject specific virtual library, rendering accessible quantitative datasets on global health and welfare issues and pooling a range of pedagogic ideas, methods and activities on the ICSP website:



(<http://www.globalwelfare.net>).

Over the longer-term this will help build the website into a valuable pedagogic and research resource that facilitates the identification, navigation and practical use of a range of sources and types of information in global welfare studies.

We hope to draw on the knowledge and expertise of those of you who are teaching and researching in this subject area. If you would like to contribute to the one or more elements of the project, on an ad hoc basis or more regularly, please contact us on ICSP@shef.ac.uk. All contributions to the development of this resource will be appreciated and, more specifically, acknowledged on the ICSP website.

We look forward to hearing from you!

7th. UK JOINT SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION CONFERENCE – 6/7/8 JULY 2005

'Making Connections: new learning partnerships that challenge barriers to inclusion'

SWAP High Education Academy Subject Centre has been asked for the fifth consecutive year to organise the UK Joint Social Work Education Conference, to be held 6-8 July 2005 at Loughborough University.

Over the last four years SWAP has helped to establish this event as the premier social work education conference in the UK.

In 2005, we aim to make the conference:

● **Bigger** – three days, with accommodation for up to 250 residential delegates

● **Better** – easy-to-use on-line abstract submission and conference bookings systems

● **Bolder** – student bursary competition; service user involvement in conference planning and delivery

Aided by a planning group representing a wide range of stakeholders, this year's event aims to attract delegates from the professional worlds of education, training and practice.

The conference will focus on strategic attempts to further develop and enhance social work education, training and practice in relation to the following themes:

- Challenging Service Userism in Learning, Practice and Research
- Learning for Innovative Practice
- Connectivity through Information and Communication Technology
- Promoting Quality in Learning, Practice and Research
- New Approaches to Partnership in Social Work Education
- Delivering Better Practice through Interprofessional Learning

- Working for Inclusion in Learning, Practice and Research
- International perspectives: Europe and beyond.

In addition to programmed sessions around sub-themes, there will be opportunities for networking, visiting the extensive exhibitors' area, attending special interest group meetings, taking part in writing for publication workshops, and also relaxing with old friends and new acquaintances.



● **Put the dates in your diary and plan to be there. We look forward to seeing you in Loughborough.**

<http://www.external.swap.ac.uk/jswec2005/jswecl.asp>