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Editorial

Are you planning next year's teaching? Are you thinking about researching your teaching practice? Do you want to know what colleagues in your field are doing? Issue 11 of *Swap news* brings you news of activities, research, events and resources that can support your preparation for the 2006-07 academic year.

If you are teaching social policy I recommend that you make a point of signing up to access the audio resources in the *Spoken Word* sound archive and integrate, for example, William Beveridge talking about his new scheme for social security into your teaching material. Or you could link in to the video clips from the *Horizons in Social Policy* international seminar series held in 2005 which are now available on the SWAP website.

Catch up with other e-learning news and the new ELTE project which hopefully will become familiar to both social policy and social work colleagues over the next two years. Or read what it feels like to experience an on-line Masters with our winning student essay.

Are you teaching research methods? Maybe it is a good time to have a look at the training materials available to support researchers using on-line methods.

Social work colleagues might like to contact Judith Laurance who is working on SWAP's behalf to develop a network of those engaged in thinking about the changes in children's services and how they will affect student learning. Read reports from the regional workshops on implementing personal development planning and the event held for external examiners.

Do you have an interesting research and development idea, or ways of supporting student learning that need



sharing? Look out for SWAP's new call for funded projects. Funding this year is divided into dissemination projects of up to £2,000 each, open to social policy and social work colleagues and pedagogic research projects of up to £15,000, which this year are targeted at those teaching social policy.

SWAP needs your input to help us ensure that we are working in ways that are useful to you, so please do spend a few minutes completing our survey form either on paper or on-line at www.swap.ac.uk/survey.asp. If you choose to tell us who you are when you complete it we will send you one of our sought after memory sticks.

There will be some interesting changes at SWAP over the next few months. Our Steering Group Chair, Professor Grainne Conole, has moved on to the Open University and we are in the process of developing a role specification prior to seeking a new chair. As highlighted in the last issue of *SWAP news*, SWAP has been undergoing some staff changes and in this issue we acknowledge arrivals and departures. Finally, would you like to be part of the SWAP venture a member of staff, on secondment or as a SWAP Associate? We are currently advertising for both replacement and additional posts as well as inviting you to register your interest in undertaking specific pieces of work on a consultancy basis.

Jackie Rafferty
Director, SWAP



SWAP news:

Staff changes and new posts

More changes are happening within the SWAP team. Sue Orton, a long standing member, has left to take up another post at Sussex University. Tom Hopkins, who has organised the Joint Social Work Education Conference (JSWEC) for many years, is retiring this summer. We are grateful for their enormous contribution to the work of SWAP. Julia Phillips has left the employ of SWAP and is working on a consultancy basis on Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) until the end of July 2006. We wish her well in her future plans.

New members of the team include Sarah Baker, Administrative Assistant, Marc Cole-Bailey, Communications and Projects Officer and Dan Melluish, Information Systems Officer. Julia Waldman is now Deputy Director.

We are advertising for replacement and additional posts to the team. If you are passionate about learning and teaching and would enjoy the challenge of working in a UK wide context, one of these may be the job for you.

- *Academic Adviser (Level 5)*
- *Learning and Teaching Adviser (Level 4)*

Both posts have the role of supporting and enhancing the student learning experience by working with social policy, social work and cognate disciplines, and other stakeholders, to exchange and develop learning and teaching practice.

Both these posts are full time although secondments and part-time requests (0.5fte minimum) will be considered.

- *Events Co-ordinator (Projects) who will be responsible for managing a programme of events associated with ELTE, a two year e-learning project and the Joint Social Work Education Conference (JSWEC). This post is full-time.*

Details of these three posts can be found on the Job Opportunities section of the University of Southampton website.

www.soton.ac.uk/jobs/index.shtml

Consultancy opportunities

In order to meet the range of work SWAP needs to deliver within a UK context, we will be seeking to commission pieces of time-limited, task-focused work to be carried out on a consultancy basis over the next year. Detailed plans are being drawn up which will be disseminated when finalised. If, however, you wish to register your interest in receiving information on our future consultancy opportunities please contact Sarah Baker on 023 8059 9310 or s.baker@swap.ac.uk, putting 'consultancy interest' in the subject header.



SWAP funded projects 2006 – invitation to bid

Following on from successful funded project calls in previous years, SWAP is inviting bids related to a round of projects. Outputs from 2005 projects, completed by June 2006, will be disseminated in the coming months. For 2006, proposals will be considered that relate to the following topics:

- linking research and teaching in a disciplinary context
- internationalisation (of the curriculum or the student market)
- service teaching and inter-professional education
- assessment

Two types of projects are being funded.

Dissemination projects

Applications are invited from those teaching social policy and social work at higher education level.

A maximum of seven projects of up to £2000 each will be funded, with completion required by April 30th 2007.

The types of activities that may be funded include:

- provision of a conference or workshop
- production and printing of reports of research and development projects
- production of CD-roms or e-media

Pedagogical research projects

Applications are invited from those teaching social policy at higher education level. Funding of up to £15,000 per project is available for 3 projects, to be completed by November 30th 2008 or sooner. Applications are encouraged particularly from early career teaching staff.

Download further information and application details from www.swap.ac.uk. Click on 'SWAP activities' then on 'SWAP funded projects' under 'Projects' or contact Sarah Baker on 023 8059 9310 or s.baker@swap.ac.uk

If you wish to discuss an idea or proposal please contact Julia Waldman on 023 8059 2523 or j.waldman@swap.ac.uk

Closing date for applications September 22nd 2006.

Call for evaluation proposals

We are commissioning a combined evaluation of the e-supported Learning and Teaching Enhancement Project (ELTE), SWAP's activities and the Mental Health in Higher Education Project (mhhe). Details will be posted on the SWAP website, or request a tender pack from Sarah Baker on 023 8059 9310 or s.baker@swap.ac.uk

Closing date for submission of proposals is September 15th 2006.



Report of social policy consultation day

On 27th April 2006 SWAP held a social policy strategy consultation day to look at future SWAP support of the social policy higher education community in the enhancement of the student learning experience. Participants reviewed what had worked in the past, what aspects had been less successful and identified strategic priorities for future work.

By the end of the day four sets of recommendations had been drawn up in areas in which SWAP might usefully focus its work with those teaching social policy. These were:

To develop a continuing professional development pathway strategy that:

- addresses career progression
- gives priority to post graduate researchers (PGRs) in supporting the development of confidence and competence as teachers
- recognises that students from undergraduate level onwards may be developing teaching skills
- recognises the needs of specific groups such as part-time, hourly paid teachers and graduate assistants
- promotes lifelong learning for academics
- champions good teachers and promotes their value to institutions

To develop a more effective communication strategy via:

- networking
- building relationships - with both a wider range of individuals and groups
- giving a higher and more distinctive profile to the social policy constituency
- embedding more effective intelligence gathering on what is happening in social policy in academia
- extending dissemination routes for research and good practice related to social policy teaching and learning, such as monographs and other paper-based publications.
- publicity - continuing to use *Policy World* and extending publicity to academic journals

To distribute resources in targeted ways by:

- supporting staff just starting out on their academic career
- investigating 'carrots' for experienced staff
- building in matched funding requirements to some grant giving activities

To extend the collaborative strategy by:

- bridging disciplinary and departmental boundaries
- promoting collaboration at a variety of levels between a wide range of people and organisations e.g. international collaboration
- working smarter
 - identifying the market
 - attending to the importance of 'naming' to attract more people e.g. policy studies event for economists, education, sociologists
 - identifying hot topics around which collaboration can be focused, e.g. curriculum areas

The outcomes from this day will inform SWAP planning for 2006-07. We are grateful to those who participated in the day including Sandra Shaw, Bob Rotheram, Michael Connolly, Deirdre Heenan, Zoe Irving and Graham Crowe.

SWAP's priorities for 2006-07

SWAP's overall aim is "to support the social policy and social work educator subject communities in order to enhance the student learning experience". Within this we focus on different priorities and 'hot topics' from year to year. These are informed by this year's work, what is on the horizon in higher education and government policy and in consultation with SWAP's steering group and cognate subject centres. Our plans are coming together for 2006-07 and we will be prioritising the following areas of work:

- the research/teaching nexus
- inter-professional education and service teaching
- assessment
- internationalisation

Each of these will be unpacked in our detailed operational plans which we will submit to the Higher Education Academy by the end of June. As we flesh out the above areas of work we will keep you informed so that you can watch out for those areas that particularly interest you. If you are involved in these areas and would like to share your plans, so that we can align our efforts, do get in touch with either Julia Waldman on j.waldman@swap.ac.uk or Jackie Rafferty, on j.rafferty@swap.ac.uk.

News from the Mental Health in Higher Education Project (mhhe)

Jill Anderson, Senior Project Development Officer, mhhe

Hosted by SWAP, the Mental Health in Higher Education Project (mhhe), aims to increase networking and the sharing of approaches to learning and teaching about mental health across the disciplines in higher education.

Some recent developments include:

- relocation of the senior project development officer to the Department of Applied Social Science at Lancaster University
- creation of a second (full time) project development officer post to be based at the new Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health (CEIMH) at the University of Birmingham www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk
- increased regional activity and creation of a networks page on the mhhe website
- publication of an article based on an mhhe workshop in the June edition of *Social Work Education*
- involvement in establishment of PEPIN – the Professional Education Public Involvement Network www.jiscmail.ac.uk/archives/pepin.html

- co-ordination of Developers of User and Carer Involvement (DUCIE) – a support network for workers directly employed by higher education institutions to develop user and carer involvement in education.

The mhhe project continues to provide a link between national organisations (such as the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP), the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE), the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and the growing community of social work educators with an interest in mental health. With the establishment of the *New Ways of Working for Social Workers* programme, there is an opportunity to enhance this role.

Further details of mhhe activities, can be found at www.mhhe.heacademy.ac.uk, along with regularly updated news and events sections. There are now 950 members on the mhhe database, who receive a regular e-bulletin – *mhh e-news*. Why not visit the website and help us reach 1000? Jill Anderson can be contacted on j.anderson@lancaster.ac.uk

SWAP student essay competition winner



Helen Rankine

SWAP is pleased to announce that the winner of the SWAP subject centre student essay competition 2005-06 is Helen Rankine who is in the second year of an on-line Masters in Public Policy and Management at York University. Helen is sponsored on her Masters programme by the Department for Work

and Pensions (DWP). The runner up in the essay competition is Siobhen Galvin who is in the first year of her BA (Hons) in Social Work at the School of Health and Social Sciences of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.

More than 20 entries were received, an encouraging increase from the number received

in the 2004-2005 competition. Of these, 15 were from social work students and four from social policy students. The remaining entries, from students studying sociology, were forwarded to the subject centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP) and one of these won the C-SAP competition.

Helen, who lives in Scotland, will receive a prize of £250 for her winning essay which answered the question *How does your experience of your course compare with any expectations you may have had?* Helen will also be offered the opportunity to attend either the Joint Social Work Education Conference (JSWEC) or the Social Policy Association (SPA) conference, all expenses paid.

Helen's essay will be put forward with other winning essays from the 23 Higher Education Academy (HEA) subject centres to have a chance of becoming the HEA's overall essay winner attracting the top prize of a Toshiba laptop.

Prize winning essay by Helen Rankine

How does your experience of your course compare with any expectations you may have had?

I am currently in my second year of an on-line Masters in Public Policy and Management at York. I last undertook academic study over 20 years ago when I completed my MA, more conventionally by attending university for three years, so I feel uniquely qualified to compare the two experiences.

Initially I was euphoric on discovering the on-line Masters on the Department of Work and Pension's (DWP) Intranet. I had longed to return to academic study in some form, for some considerable time, but I needed to balance this with the demands of raising my children and contributing to the family income. Not only that but the DWP could provide financial support.

I did however have some reservations not least of which were the two decades away from formal study and the on-line nature of the course. I am definitely no technophobe, having dealt with IT for the last 15 years of my career, but it was difficult to comprehend how the student-tutor relationship or the world of the tutorial could be successfully replicated on-line, particularly with participants from all parts of the globe.

Coming from DWP and indeed the UK, probably does give a slight benefit, as I have been able to take advantage of the induction day and also will be attending the annual conference this year. The induction allayed some of my initial fears except when I discovered that most of the DWP participants were a grade or so above me. It was extremely useful to put faces to names when first going on-line, but I can say I feel just as connected to my course colleagues in other parts of the world and it has been great to get their perspective. One can get quite jaded after several years as a civil servant and it's good to gain from their experiences – the bad as well as the good!

Participating on-line did feel a little odd to begin with, particularly making that all important first post. It's kind of hard to pitch your response at just the right level. You don't want to come across as stupid, but you soon realise that your colleagues aren't really impressed with a major opus. Very quickly it became like a normal academic tutorial, with the odd witty comment and provocative thought, except that unlike real time there is an obvious advantage in being able to seriously consider your contribution before posting. On the downside, on-line conversation does not have the luxury of those nuances that the spoken word or body language can intimate, so it's important to carefully consider your style and content of post, so as not to offend.

What of the course content? Well that has been a real revelation for me. After over twenty years in the DWP in its various guises, I have really found it refreshing to consider management techniques and the purpose of social security (to name but two aspects of the course) from a fresh perspective. Our organisation is undergoing massive and rapid transformation at the moment. It has certainly helped me to understand some of the rationale behind these huge upheavals and hopefully I am a better public servant as a result. I truly believe that the DWP will need my newly attuned analytical skills in the brave new world that is currently being formed.

In fairness, I did find some of the initial reading and discussion topics to be rather weighty and daunting to say the least, but I kept with it, with the support of the tutors and my DWP colleagues who find most of the module topics fascinating when applied to our everyday experiences. Each tutor, in common with face-to-face tutors, has their own style of on-line teaching and it is interesting how quickly their personalities become apparent even though you have never met them in person. The option of an introductory telephone call is also offered with every module, as well as a conference call to discuss assignments. This provides a good balance to the on-line nature of the course and helps calm the nerves about essays.

The organisation of the course is very different to my previous undergraduate experience, obviously, but I think that makes it a more positive learning experience this time round. Firstly the participants in each module are divided into smaller, more manageable groups. This gives the appearance of the tutor allocating more time to the group than would in practice be possible under traditional teaching with large groups for lectures. Secondly everyone has a chance to contribute and in some respects it is easier to be honest (or even dishonest) in the virtual environment. Finally, the support team play a very obvious and integral role, to the learning experience. This is vitally important when you are not on campus. They act as contact point for any problems and also serve as the link with the university, helping us to feel an integral part.

In summary, I am surprised how hard I have found it to find many negatives about my experience of this course. Maybe I should have written this around assignment time, whilst burning the midnight oil. I'm sure this is mainly due to the attention to detail in its design and by those who are providing our on-line experience. It has provided me with an opportunity to re-enter learning while fulfilling my domestic obligations, yet at the same time I have had the chance to engage with colleagues from all walks of life and differing parts of the world. All this and it has added a new dimension to a dusty career. It can't get much better than that!

Runner up essay by Siobhen Galvin

How does your experience of your course compare with any expectations you may have had?

“Full time job and breadwinner, married, husband disabled, one grown up and two teenage children, foster carer, union lay tutor and now a student on secondment to the degree in social work, so what am I doing here?” This is a question I ask myself on at least a weekly basis and often have difficulty remembering the answer. I assume that I must have thought the course was a good idea at the time I applied and perhaps it was. After 20 years working in public services, mainly for social services, I found myself stocktaking and wondering what I was going to do for the next 20 odd years until retirement. It had become apparent that, despite experience in a wide range of settings and with a number of different service groups, more and more doors were closing with the drive to a qualified workforce. So it was time to bite the proverbial bullet and actually qualify as a social worker, hopefully anyway.

So what did I expect? I expected what I presume many people with my length of service undertaking the social work degree would expect; political correctness gone mad (if that isn't a politically incorrect thing to say), lots of theory (but no advice on what to do when confronted by the family's huge and snarling dog), a naivety about life and work in the real world, and too much essay writing. Oh! And to feel like the oldest swinger student in town.

So has the course lived up to my expectations? Sadly the fact is that I am one of the oldest students on campus and there is a lot of essay writing. As for the rest, well I am thankful that in many areas the course has not lived up to my expectations. I have encountered thoughtful discussion on the use and impact of language, a seminar which actually ended up in a long discussion about dealing with the more challenging aspects of home visits including the pets, and on the whole an optimistic and hopeful outlook on social work tinged with a healthy dose of realism.

But it was the bits I did not expect that have been the most rewarding aspects of the course to date. For instance, the module on the relationship between social policy and social services proved to be fascinating especially as it contextualised and consolidated my knowledge and experience of politics and activism with approaches to social work. However, initially it was a real surprise to me that some students, particularly those in the younger age group had little awareness of both past and present approaches to social justice, and concepts such as Thatcherism, and the 'third way' for example. This unfortunately not only enhanced my sense of being old, as after all some of the students would have been children during the Thatcher years, but affected the depth and breadth of discussion in the seminars which followed every lecture.

This range of students' backgrounds has become something of a recurring theme. The social work

degree course has a high percentage of seconded students who are currently employed in a wide range of posts within social services and for varying amounts of time. Although the direct entry students were also required to have had some experience in social care and obviously had to meet the entry requirements there has, I think, been a wide disparity between students' - both seconded and direct entry - levels of knowledge and experience. This has impacted on the students' response to the course with some finding the lectures too basic while others were overstretched by the content. From a personal perspective the course in dealing with all social service areas has allowed me an opportunity to gain a greater insight and understanding of those aspects of social work outside my work experience and in so doing held my interest. But where the subject matter has coincided with my work experience and in-house training it has been easy to lose that interest.

In addition, there is also a disparity in the level of students' academic experience with some of the mature students nervous about the prospect of assignments. Initially quietly confident having studied at this level in the past, my confidence was soon shattered as I encountered the learning for practice approach central to the course and the requirement for reflection not only on social work skills and practice but about my own skills and values. Years of depersonalising my writing have been overturned by the need to write using the first person. Writing my first reflective account I could not bring myself to use the dreaded 'I' word and resorted to the use of 'one'. One is still unsure if this style of writing is quite what was expected!

But the highlight of the course so far has been the practice learning opportunity or social work student placement. Again having worked for so many years I considered the prospect of a 15-day observation placement to ascertain fitness for practice as something of an anomaly. But again the course has overcome my initial cynicism as the placement has proved to be a positive experience. I have stopped and actually talked to others not only about the day to day management of, for example, an allocated case, referral, or assessment but their views, underpinning theories, feelings, anxieties and achievements. I have spent time with social workers, managers, health professionals, carers and service users in all kinds of settings in a different service area to my own. It has proved to be a very rewarding experience.

So what am I doing here? Well, I now know that I am not just here for the qualification. I am here to develop new insights into social work, to gain knowledge and new understandings of individuals and families, policies, theory and law, and the impact of discrimination, poverty and oppression, to develop and improve my practice and in so doing provide a better service. I have learnt that expectations and experience do not necessarily tally and you never know in time one may also overcome one's problem with reflective writing and that word!

E-Learning

There are increased and varied pressures driving the greater use of e-learning within UK higher education. There is little doubt that new technologies provide exciting opportunities for enhancement and innovation in learning and teaching. The following articles give details of the new ELTE project; new audio and video resources for social policy teaching and a virtual training environment which will support researchers using on-line methods.

Supported Learning and Teaching Enhancement Project (ELTE)

SWAP is delighted to announce this new project, which will run until the summer of 2008 to support e-learning development in social policy and social work.

Developing the work undertaken as part of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Distributed E-learning (DEL) Phase I Project, SWAP has been successful in its bid to the second JISC DEL funding round for the Higher Education Academy's twenty-four subject centres. These funds have been matched by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

The aims of the project are:

- to increase knowledge and awareness of e-learning tools and resources and how they may support teaching and learning activities
- to improve uptake of existing repository content and on-line resources by educators in social policy and social work
- to promote and develop a culture of content-sharing by social policy and social work academics in higher education and to seek to identify the specific interests in, and barriers to, content sharing
- to extend collaborative work by subject academics in e-learning

An exciting and varied range of activities will be delivered in the project, focused on some thematic areas including:

- e-assessment
- time-based media resources
- communication and collaborative tools
- repositories and portals
- virtual learning environments and personalised learning spaces
- mobile technologies

Activities will include:

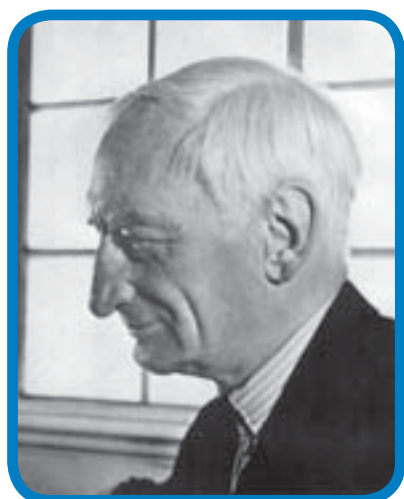
- exhibition stands at major conferences, to include demonstrating e-tools and resources
- provision of display material packs for smaller conferences and events
- provision of half-day regional workshops
- provision of an e-moderating course with a discipline focus
- creation of a series of on-line, time-limited staff development opportunities e.g. wikis, blogs, JISMAIL discussions, videoconferencing, web conferencing on e-learning related topics or focused on curriculum/academic areas such as internationalisation
- special features in SWAP newsletters
- production of paper-based guides or scholarly publications
- call for case studies on use of JISC/e-resources (curriculum materials, websites, time-based media etc)
- competitions to win equipment to generate case studies on its use in a learning and teaching context
- commissioning of consultants with expertise in specific areas of e-learning to support the project activities.

Contact Julia Waldman on 023 8059 2523 or j.waldman@swap.ac.uk

- if you are running an event in the next academic year and would like to be sent a display pack or think it would be suitable for an exhibition stand
- if you would like to register your interest in consultancy work with the project
- if you would like to discuss or know more about the project

More details on the project can also be found on SWAP website at www.swap.ac.uk in the e-learning section.

New audio and video resources for social policy teaching



Sir William Beveridge

As part of the work undertaken for the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Distributed E-learning (DEL) Phase I Project, SWAP developed two strands of work that were focused on the creation of digital resources for the teaching of social policy. The materials will be available free to incorporate into teaching activities such as:

- inserting audio or video clips within a PowerPoint presentation for use in the classroom
- creating a hyperlink to the clips within a course or module resource in a virtual learning environment
- encouraging students to download audio clips as MP3 files to listen to on MP3 players in their own time (where copyright regulations allow)

Special collection of social policy audio resources within the Spoken Word Project sound archive

Vast quantities of spoken word recorded through the 20th and into the 21st century are being digitised by many agencies. Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), the BBC (Information and Archives), Northwestern and Michigan State Universities are collaborating within a JISC/ National Science Foundation (NSF) programme to make this audio available for classroom (and research) use. This collaboration is called the *Spoken Word Project*.

SWAP's research and development work on e-learning had indicated that there was patchy awareness of the potential of services like the *Spoken Word Project* to enhance teaching and learning. It was felt that creating a special collection with the archive would provide a means of promoting and encouraging the use of such resources.

SWAP commissioned the creation of approximately 30 hours of 'collected' digitised audio to be made available to teachers and students in a catalogued collection of social policy related 'mixed resources'. A number of other sources of information, such as photographs and documents have also been compiled to supplement the audio material. The collection focuses on three aspects of British social policy over the last 50 years:

- a) the making of the modern welfare state
- b) the impact of devolution on the social policy context of Scotland
- c) the changing role of women in British society

The audio selected for use has the authentic voices of those involved in significant social policy events. For example, three separate audio programmes have been retrieved that allow students to hear from those directly involved about the impact of the Beveridge reforms of the late 1940s. There is also supporting documentation to help set the events within a wider social context.

- Sound Archive: Sir William Beveridge www.spokenword.ac.uk/record_view.php?pbd=gcu-a0a1x7-b
- Archive Hour: The Beveridge Inheritance www.spokenword.ac.uk/record_view.php?pbd=gcu-a0a1i8-b
- Tony Blair on 'Welfare to Work' plans www.spokenword.ac.uk/record_view.php?pbd=gcu-a0a1a6-b

To find these resources go to www.spokenword.ac.uk/index.php. You will need to register to use the site.

Horizons in Social Policy International Videoconferencing Seminar Series

SWAP ran an international videoconferencing seminar series in the Autumn of 2005. This involved collaboration between SWAP and the Worldwide Universities Network (www.wun.ac.uk) and specifically three other WUN partner institutions in the UK, Netherlands and the USA. The seminar series aimed to:

- understand more about how learning technologies can support and enhance international collaboration
- enable opportunities for students and staff to access presentations from renowned speakers both in real time and via a digital archive
- show how shareable learning and teaching resources can be created and shared
- explore and discuss how the challenge of managing care and employment is addressed through policy responses and to internationalise this discussion
- explore key debates in employment, formal care and family care policy in a European and US context
- highlight and discuss up-to-date evidence in relation to these areas of policy development

Four seminars were delivered and the digital recordings of these are now available for re-use. In addition to three complete presentations, shorter clips, between one and eight minutes in length, have also been produced. These will enable teachers to insert short pieces linking research from major studies and teaching in a disciplinary context from major studies into their own teaching activities. For example these pieces may be on key concepts, research evidence highlights and case studies.

Abstracts and PowerPoint presentations for each of the first three seminars in the series are also available. Details of the four presentations are as follows:

Maria Evandrou, Professor of Gerontology, Centre for Research on Ageing, School of Social Sciences, University of Southampton, UK	Employment and social roles across cohorts
Professor Jenny Hockey, Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield	Dependence, independence and interdependency: families, farming and the life course
Professor Steve Anderson and Professor Mark Testa, Director of the Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA	Kinship caregiving
Robert Maier, Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Utrecht, Netherlands	The Life Course and Social Policy

To view and access the video clips go to the SWAP website www.swap.ac.uk/elearning/jiscprojectvideo.asp

Virtual training environment will support researchers using on-line methods

Jane Wellens, Staff Development Centre, University of Leicester

On-line research methods (ORMs) are computer mediated methodological approaches to data collection which are facilitated in a 'virtual' environment. In simpler terms, ORMs are usually traditional methods of data collection adapted to use on-line. Therefore, research methods ranging from questionnaire surveys to participant observation have been adapted for on-line use through tools such as e-mail, websites and various software packages.

ORMs provide great methodological potential and versatility for research in all fields of social science. It has been suggested that the use of these methods mitigates the distance of space, enables research to be easily internationalised without the usual associated travel costs and can be valuable for researchers contacting groups or individuals who may otherwise be difficult to reach, such as the less physically mobile.

The growth and impact of the Internet in recent years has meant that the use of on-line research methods has proven to be an increasingly alluring option for social scientists. As such, on-line research methods are becoming more established as a legitimate means of data collection removing some of the 'considerable anxiety about just how far existing tried and tested research methods are appropriate for technologically mediated interactions' (Hine, 2005, 1). However, there has been some variety across different disciplines in the extent to which on-line methods have taken hold, and in the level of awareness of the theoretical, practical, and technical issues involved. As Mann and Stewart (2000, 5) noted "...until now ... researchers have had to proceed with few practical or theoretical guidelines".

This is definitely the message that University of Leicester researchers Clare Madge (Department of Geography) and Henrietta O' Connor (Centre for Labour Market Studies) received whenever they reported the results of their *Cyberparents* project (www.geog.le.ac.uk/baby), which employed on-line questionnaires and synchronous on-line interviews to examine how, why and in what ways new

parents use the Internet as an information source about parenting and as a form of social support. Demand for training, and in particular hands-on training was expressed to Clare and Henrietta at presentations and in response to publication of their research (Madge and O'Connor, 2002, 2005; O'Connor and Madge, 2001, 2004). They were also commissioned to contribute to books on on-line methods and the *Cyberparents* research was incorporated as a teaching resource at a number of academic institutions. All of this further emphasised to them the interdisciplinary interest in, and relevance of, ORMs to the social science community.

"...the use of ORMs must be carefully considered and their long-term success will ultimately depend on the quality and credibility of the information that they generate."

Based on their experience and this demand they collaborated with University of Leicester colleagues Jane Wellens (Educational Developer), Tristram Hooley (Postgraduate Training Co-ordinator) and Rob Shaw (Educational Technologist) to develop a practical training package focusing specifically on the potentials and problems of ORMs. The project was part of phase two of the ESRC's Research Methods Programme. The team felt that given the nature of the subject matter, an on-line learning resource was the ideal means of delivering training in ORMs, offering users choice over how and when to access the package, along with the flexibility to explore different content areas according to need, and prior knowledge and experience.

Training package

The package they developed, *Exploring ORMs in a Virtual Training Environment*, aims to make training in these methods widely available across disciplines, and to highlight the potentials and problems that they bring. It provides:

- a high-quality on-line portal to provide training in on-line research methods
- a self-supporting on-line resource to enhance understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of on-line research methods including on-line questionnaires, and virtual synchronous and asynchronous interviews
- access to a wide range of successful good practice case studies
- discussion of the ethical issues of on-line research
- important resource links
- comprehensive technical guidance

Throughout, the package emphasises the team's belief that there is a need for on-line researchers to tread with caution and practice their 'craft' with reflexivity. They strongly believe that on-line research is not going to replace on-site research but rather will become another option in the researcher's methodological 'toolkit'. Therefore the use of ORMs must be carefully considered and their long-term success will ultimately depend on the quality and credibility of the information that they generate.

The training package is structured into four main sections. The introduction provides a general background to ORMs and introduces the site. Four modules provide the main training element of the package and address on-line questionnaires, on-line Interviews, ethics and technical aspects. Within each of these modules a series of interdisciplinary case studies, taken from research projects which have used on-line methods, are used to illustrate the methods 'in action'. The resources section acts as a portal to key information and links in the area of ORMs. The project background section offers a range of general information about the project and also captures the social production of the website through the reflections of the project team throughout the development process, one aim being to share the lessons learnt with similar projects.

The package is targeted at a wide audience including researchers and postgraduates in the higher education sector, and researchers working for other organisations, such as those involved with public policy and market research. It has therefore been designed with the different requirements of these users in mind. For example, it is possible to either 'dip in and out' of the package or to work through the modules systematically. Each module includes a built-in series of learning activities through which users can test their knowledge and understanding, but these do not have to be completed in order to move forward. For academic users, one useful feature is the 'personal references list' facility which allows users to collect a 'shopping basket' of references as they navigate the package. These can subsequently be printed or downloading as text or end note-ready XML.

From the outset, a programme of rigorous evaluation was established to ensure on-going feedback could be obtained and used to inform the design and development process. Demonstrating best practice, the evaluation programme aimed to ensure the training package would meet the needs of different user communities as effectively as possible through the use of heuristic evaluation, usability studies, trialling and user studies and content evaluation by recognised subject experts in the field of ORMs.

The *Exploring ORMs in a Virtual Training Environment* package is available at www.geog.le.ac.uk/orm. Although the website is designed for self-study use on-line, a range of face-to-face and on-line training and dissemination activities are planned to ensure that the training package will enhance current training programmes for the research community and contribute to the body of research in on-line methods and on-line learning.

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Young graduates and lifelong learning: an ESRC-funded study

Drs. Rachel Brooks, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy, and Glyn Everett, Research Fellow, Department of Political, International and Policy Studies, University of Surrey



Various quantitative studies, such as the National Adult Learning Survey, have pointed to considerable differences by level of educational qualification in attitude to and participation in adult or lifelong learning. Indeed, they suggest that graduates are more likely than other groups to

engage in adult learning, and to be motivated to do so by the intrinsic interest of the subject matter. However, exploring the wider meaning attached to participation in such activities has been outside the remit of these studies. In an attempt to redress this gap the current research, drawing on life history interviews and focus groups with recent graduates, is structured around four main questions:

1. What are young graduates' experiences of lifelong learning after higher education?
2. What are their attitudes towards lifelong learning in the future? Specifically, how do they assess its worth and what role do they see it playing in their future lives, and has their experience of combining work with study had any impact on their desire or ability to engage in lifelong learning?
3. How do young adults go about making their decisions about lifelong learning opportunities, and to what extent do these decisions represent continuity or change when compared to previous processes of 'educational choice'?
4. In what ways have young adults' experiences of and attitudes towards lifelong learning been affected by their experiences of higher education, of employment or unemployment post-graduation and their understanding of the structure of the higher education sector?

It is hoped that the research will enhance our knowledge of the role of education and training in the lives of young adults and feed into policy debates about the interface between higher education and lifelong learning.

The research thus far undertaken indicates a strong emphasis upon job-based learning, or training, over and above an oft-stated desire to do further study 'for its own sake'. Whilst the majority of graduates expressed contentment with their work/leisure/education balance, a significant number also marked up a desire for 'leisure-learning' which was not 'yet' possible due to the demands of work and work-based training.

This prompts questions about how we, and the graduates, conceptualise the 'use' of having a degree in an era of higher education massification, exploring issues of generic skills and personal growth. It also raises questions around the role and function of wider lifelong learning practices for those in their 20s, as well as the status of the work-leisure-education balance of young professionals, and whether this encourages or discourages efforts to develop a learning society.

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www.surrey.ac.uk/politics/research/young-graduates.htm

Accessibility

If you wish to read this publication on-line please visit:

www.swap.ac.uk/news/newsletters.asp

PDF versions of *SWAP news*, dating back to 2000, allow the reader to adjust the size of the text.

The demographic profile of social work and social policy teaching staff

Dr. David Mills, Lecturer in the Pedagogy of the Social Sciences, Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford

Is social work likely to be affected by the retirement of the generation of university staff appointed during the 1960s? In 2005 the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) decided to commission a review of the demographic profile of all the UK social sciences, amidst concern about a high percentage of staff aged over 50, particularly in comparison to the physical sciences. How significant was it that 47 per cent of social work academics, and more than half of all staff in education, were aged over 50? How appropriate was the ESRC's current model for funding research training? Was there an over-supply, or an under-supply, of PhDs in certain fields?

In order to answer these questions the Edinburgh University team appointed to do the review (the author, Professor Jonathan Spencer, Professor Anthony Coxon, Professor Mark Easterby-Smith, Dr Anne Jepson and Phil Hawkins) assembled a variety of different types of evidence. As well as commissioning data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), we conducted a survey of more than 320 departments, conducted focus groups and interviewed a further 100 senior staff to prepare a detailed picture of the research, staffing and capacity-building agendas facing the social sciences. The Demographic Review of the Social Sciences was finally published in February 2006, and is available on the ESRC website (www.esrc.ac.uk)

A key finding that colours the whole report is that the social sciences are remarkably diverse. Their internal demographic structure, their patterns of recruitment and their problems of retention are all different. Direct comparisons between the disciplines can be misleading. As a result there are 18 detailed case-studies in the report, including one on social work and social policy, making extensive use of people's qualitative responses.

In the report, we argue that disciplines can be divided into those with a primary orientation to research within UK higher education (e.g. sociology, anthropology, geography), and those in which academic research overlaps with a significant concern with professional practice outside academia (e.g. education, management and business studies, social work). In these practice-linked fields, staff are appointed who have a strong background

in professional practice, and are inevitably older. This puts concerns about the seemingly 'skewed' age profiles of the social sciences into perspective. Of more concern to the ESRC was the need to build autonomous research capacity in such fields, especially where there is a great demand for policy and consultancy research.

Social work is one of the smaller social sciences, with fewer than 600 permanent staff, 60 per cent of whom are female, and high levels of both retirement and new recruitment. It is undergoing a great deal of change with the introduction of accredited undergraduate degrees. The very high student-staff ratio was a real problem for many, as was the difficulty of 'buying in' staff to cover all aspects of the new curriculum. Our respondents also reported concerns about competition between departments for small numbers of qualified job applicants, and the difficulty of accessing ESRC research training funds and building the field's research base. This may change now that social work is a recognised ESRC discipline.

The review concluded that each field needs tailored support. The ESRC now seems committed to fostering a dialogue between practitioners and academics across the social sciences, and to listen and act upon the recommendations of subject communities. There is currently a review of social work research being carried out by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE) and the Joint University Council's Social Work Education Committee (JUC-SWEC), and this review will inform the ESRC's work.

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Preparing for changing roles in children's services

Judith Laurance, SWAP Associate

Judith is undertaking work on behalf of the Social Policy and Social Work subject centre (SWAP) to consider how best to prepare social workers and other professionals in training, and employment, for the changing roles in children's services. As well as the much closer links with colleagues in education, there will be other changes affecting many professionals working with children, and their relationships with each other and with social workers. SWAP would like to support professional programmes in higher education including those for social workers, teachers, health workers, psychologists, and criminal justice workers, to prepare their students for the new environment.

The first step will be to invite colleagues representing a range of interests to take part in a discussion forum. This should offer an opportunity to explore issues and dilemmas in some depth. Later in the academic year, SWAP will host a larger event to disseminate and facilitate discussion of findings.

Issues already identified include:

- how should professional educators respond to recent changes in the ways that children are safeguarded in order to best prepare students for the workforce?

- what might a 'common core' of childcare knowledge look like? And how might it link into existing child care curricula?
- should those who want to undertake professional work with children and families train together?
- how far should children and young people be involved in higher education qualifying programmes for professionals?
- what do we mean by 'integrated care and education'? How do we equip 'social pedagogues' for their task?
- how can we prepare students for sound interprofessional working whilst ensuring that they have a sound knowledge base underpinning their particular field of practice?
- how far should we be considering international as well as national changes in the way services for children are configured, when reviewing the curriculum for professionals in training?

Please get in touch with judith.laurance@btinternet.com and cc e-mails to swap@swap.ac.uk if you would like to find out more information about this project.

Forthcoming events

SWAP's website at www.swap.ac.uk includes a data-base of conference, workshops and other events which are of interest to the social work and social policy communities.

- 1- 2 September 2006, Conference on Retention, Progression and Social Inclusion, Bath Spa University. For further details contact m.shaw@bathspa.ac.uk or visit <http://oldsite.bathspa.ac.uk/schools/historical-and-cultural-studies/conference-on-retention/>
- 18-20 September 2006, 3rd Disability Studies Association conference, George Fox Centre at Lancaster University. For further details contact h.morgan@lancaster.ac.uk or visit www.disabilitystudies.net/?content=3

- 20 September 2006, Internet for Social Research, Intute: Social Sciences, University of Birmingham. For further details contact Angela.Joyce@bristol.ac.uk.
- 23 October 2006, Sexuality in Social Work and Social Care, The Conference Centre, Keyworth House, London South Bank University. For further details contact hafforpj@lsbu.ac.uk.

Visit the SWAP website for further details of these and other events.

SWAP event reports: Implementing personal development planning – challenges and opportunities

Two regional workshops, which brought together social policy and social work academics to explore issues related to the implementation of Personal Development Planning (PDP), were held in London on 11th November 2005 and in Sheffield on 30th November 2005.

The workshops included a number of interesting and valuable presentations on PDP practice in different institutional contexts. Group discussions confirmed the diversity of approaches currently being adopted by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including incorporating PDP in:

- year one key skills modules
- within the personal tutorial system
- in modules in each academic year
- in personal and professional development modules in some social work programmes

Participants noted that recording and/or assessment methods differed between HEIs. Participants reported the use of creative ideas used to promote reflection amongst students included getting students to film short pieces of video and the use of photography and poetry.

Participants noted a number of issues for further consideration including:

- the links between PDPs and practice evidence portfolios for social work students
- PDP and different student learning styles – especially of different groups of overseas students
- the strengths and limitations of a ‘top down’ approach.
- whether PDP could be ‘sold’ as a marketing tool for students to present their skills and experience to prospective employers.

Participants questioned whether it was a good thing to put the onus on students to evaluate their learning and emphasised that the development of PDPs could not be separated from the wider context in which higher education operates, including widening participation, retention, internationalisation and the recording of learning (Burgess Review).

Several valuable recommendations or conclusions emerged from the workshops:

- revalidation time is an opportunity to review the link between PDP and existing modules
- the question of how initial enthusiasm amongst students can be harnessed needs to be considered
- it was considered important to involve tutors and students in PDP design. It was suggested that 2nd and 3rd year students could assist in the design of PDP for the first year students.

A full report on the workshops is available at: www.swap.ac.uk/events/reports.asp

SWAP event report: External examiners in social work

External examiners (EEs) for the degree in social work from all over the UK met in London in February 2006 for an event on 'enhancing practice'. This was the second event of this kind organised jointly by SWAP, the Joint University Council's Social Work Education Committee (JUC-SWEC) and the four UK care councils. The day began with presentations about current developments in social work education by staff from the care councils, providing a useful context for all examiners, especially those working across borders.

This was followed by a presentation of the findings of an audit of the first round of EE reports for the degree, undertaken jointly by JUC-SWEC, SWAP and the General Social Care Council (GSCC). The purpose was to consider the extent to which EEs reported on professional issues, such as the assessment of practice learning, readiness to practice, fitness to practice, inter-professional learning and service user and carer involvement in assessment. The audit revealed that:

- Many HEI templates were not conducive to reporting on professional issues, having been designed for academic courses. However, some HEI forms had questions about placements in practice or clinical settings, and other professional matters. Whilst some examiners provided good feedback on many issues of professional concern in the assessment process (sometimes despite an unhelpful format), others gave little feedback on these areas.
- Some EEs gave evidence to substantiate the judgements made, with reflective feedback to enhance assessment processes. In others however, such evidence was lacking. Again HEI formats can encourage good practice by open questions and prompts for evidence.

A full report of the audit will be published shortly, and will include examples from well-evidenced reports. The issues about HEI report formats have been referred to the Higher Education Academy project on external examiners. The EEs present commented that it was helpful to think about what good practice in reporting might be.

Focus groups considered further areas, and many points were made, including:

1. Complex issues may arise for the EE when a module is taught inter-professionally. If the module is held in a department other than social work (SW), the EE may have to request information about the examination of SW students.
2. The importance of accessing issues about practice learning and assessment to ensuring consistency between and within programmes. EEs were seen to have a key role in protecting and promoting professional standards in SW.
3. Sometimes EEs may be appointed to consider only one or some modules, so have no access to information about students' overall progress.
4. When EEs are invited to examine at an HEI there is an opportunity to discuss mutual expectations (e.g. about processes, sampling, and timing). Collaboration with other current EEs is helpful, and reports from previous EEs should be made available.
5. EEs discussed the leverage they have in promoting good practice in assessment, and the different ways in which this can be exercised through meetings and discussions.
6. There were continuing concerns about payments to EEs (variable between institutions and often low); this may deter freelance or practitioner examiners.
7. Some EEs felt that the care councils expected EEs to undertake functions beyond their role.
8. The EE's role to ensure that disabled students are fairly assessed was highlighted; the guidance on this drawn up by the national disability team for EEs was thought to be helpful.
9. The complexity and difficulty of undertaking the task for new Externals was highlighted. Suggestions were made for induction, on-going training and support and systems to ensure consistency.

It was agreed that an annual event of this kind could help to enhance practice in external examining and ensure that EEs are kept informed about current issues.

Evaluating the Outcomes of Social Work Education (OSWE) Project

Hilary Burgess, SWAP, and John Carpenter, Professor of Social Work and Applied Social Science, University of Bristol

This project aims to develop capacity in pedagogic research focussed on outcomes. Funded by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) with support for the participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from SWAP, it is nearing the end of its first year of work.

The learning set has met four times since October 2005. Each participating programme has been invited to send both a researcher/educator and service user/carer evaluator. The group can thus draw upon a rich range of knowledge, skills and experience of social work practice and education. The participants shared initial ideas, which have evolved through a process of debate, reflection and negotiation within host programme teams. At the meetings each HEI team has the opportunity to present and discuss their plans in the group. They also discussed some key tools for measuring outcomes of learning such as concept mapping and self-efficacy rating. Other themes have been discussed, such as user and care involvement in evaluation, engaging students, dealing with ethical issues and getting ethical approval, accessing additional sources of funding and making time for the research.

Contact between meetings has been maintained through a discussion list and by exchanging documents on a dedicated web-site. Visits to each participating programme are in progress to provide on-site consultation and enhance the understanding of the aims of the project amongst stakeholders in the programme.

Partner HEI	Project synopsis	Lead evaluator
Anglia Ruskin	What is the impact of the programme on students' knowledge and skills of working in partnership with users and carers and on their attitudes to users and carers?	Roxana Anghel
Bournemouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> measuring self efficacy in research skills with second year students undertaking research for practice module utilising blended learning 	Anne Quinney
Oxford Brookes	When and how do students acquire competence (in relation to the National Occupational Standards) as they progress through the course?	Sharon Vitali
Southampton	Student learning about anti-racist practice	Kish Bhatti Sinclair
Sussex	Student learning about partnership and inter-professional practice using Problem based learning (PBL); additional projects planned on outcomes of learning on communicating with children and the impact of student shadowing.	Imogen Taylor / Suzy Braye
York	Student learning of communication and interviewing skills	Juliet Koprowska

During the coming year, the set will continue to meet, both face to face and virtually. Interest in the work has been expressed by a number of other partners, both in the UK and internationally, so work is in progress to establish a means by which a wider group of 'associate partners' can debate the key issues, exchange ideas and develop capacity in evaluating the outcomes of social work education.

JUC-SWEC recommendations for the new Post Qualifying (PQ) Framework

Marc Cole-Bailey, Communications and
Project Office, SWAP

In February 2005, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) launched the revised post-qualifying framework for social work education and training.

The new framework will allow social workers to continue their education and training in a flexible and modular way.

Following months of consultation, including two national workshops in October 2005 and March 2006, delivered jointly with SWAP, the Joint University Council's Social Work Education Committee (JUC-SWEC) has produced a set of Recommendations for the new PQ Framework to advise Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that wish to offer post qualifying (PQ) programmes.

These recommendations are a response to requests for JUC-SWEC to provide guidance for common approaches to PQ development, and are being disseminated jointly with SWAP.

Accompanying the recommendations is a set of exemplars. Both documents are available on the SWAP website at:
www.swap.ac.uk/Quality/england.asp.

Reports from the SWAP workshops can be viewed on the SWAP website at:
www.swap.ac.uk/events/reports.asp.

SWAP is also planning to publish the recommendations and exemplars in a separate document.

Launch of *Intute* – news from the Social Science Information Gateway

Francis Owtram, Information Officer, SWAP

The Social Policy and Social Work subject centre (SWAP) is a subject editor for social welfare for the Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG) – www.sosig.ac.uk – one of a number of Internet subject gateways that together form part of the Resource Discovery Network (RDN). As a result of a detailed planning and consultation process, the RDN service is currently undergoing extensive re-structuring and re-branding. The current eight subject gateways will be re-organised to create four major subject groups including social sciences.

The new RDN service will be called *Intute*. *Intute* is a composite word – derived from 'Internet' and 'Tutorial' – and is intended to convey the experiences of guided learning and on-line resource discovery. The new service will allow users to focus search requirements from a single point thus making it easier for institutions to engage with the service through their portals, virtual learning environments (VLEs), websites and library and information service catalogues. *Intute* will deliver a much simpler interface and facilitate more effective and timely use of web resources for academics, researchers and students.

The Internet catalogues currently available via the separate subject gateways will still be fully and freely accessible as before. The new service will be launched in July 2006.

Introducing EIPEN - European Inter-professional Education Network for Health and Social Care

During 2005, the Health Sciences and Practice subject centre in collaboration with the subject centres for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine and SWAP applied to the Leonardo da Vinci Programme for funding for a European Network in Inter-professional Education. It was announced in June 2005 that the application for two years of funding was successful. EIPEN was launched in November at King's College London, after the first meeting of the steering group. The celebration lunch was attended by representatives from the 15 partners from six countries, Higher Education Academy staff and invited guests. The keynote speech was delivered by Professor Hugh Barr.

Partners in EIPEN include:

GREECE

- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- The Greek Health Informatics Association, Athens

FINLAND

- The University and the Polytechnic of Oulu
- Department of Mental Health Services, Oulu
- The Friends of the Young Association, Oulu

HUNGARY

- Szechenyi Istvan University, Győr
- United Institute of Health and Social Care, Győr

POLAND

- Dept of Hygiene and Ecology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow
- Occupational Medicine Centre of the Malopolska Region

SWEDEN

- Karolinska Institute, Stockholm
- Centre for General Medicine, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm
- The Primary Health Care Board, Stockholm County Council

UK

- Higher Education Academy Subject Centres in health and social care
- Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE)
- Creating an Interprofessional Workforce
- Steve Crane Consulting Ltd



Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

EIPEN has two interlinked aims:

- To develop a trans-national network of universities and employers in the six participating countries.
- To promote good practice in inter-professional education in health and social care.

EIPEN will develop new forms of networking for partners within the health and social care sector through a programme of events at national, regional and trans-national levels. Activities will include:

- The development of an interactive web portal of resources, to be developed by the Karolinska Institutet, and linking with national partner websites
- learning and teaching workshops in each partner country
- an international conference to be held in Krakow in 2007

Since the launch SWAP staff Hilary Burgess and Tom Hopkins have been involved in on-going project development. Together, they recently attended the second Steering Group in Athens. The central purpose of the meeting was to review progress on the various strands of activity (work packages) being undertaken by partners, and to plan for future developments and events. Amongst the latter is enhancement of the project website (www.eipen.org), including facilities for registered members to upload and download resources and materials.

The EIPEN conference being planned for September 2007 in Krakow hopes to draw some 200 delegates from across Europe to a two and a half day exploration of current and future developments in inter-professional education, practice and research.

You can keep up and get involved with EIPEN developments by registering on the project website: www.eipen.org. If you have any specific inquiries please contact Marion Helme, the project co-coordinator by e-mail at marion.helme@kcl.ac.uk