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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: LOOKING AHEAD

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SUMMARY

THE CPD SYMPOSIUM

The first Symposium on Continuing Professional Development supported by the ESRC Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance took place in May 2000 at Pembroke College, and involved over fifty invited participants from varied research and practitioner communities.

This event aimed to cross disciplinary boundaries, to explore overlaps and shared concerns, and to learn from the research evidence, from other discourses, and from what is happening in terms of CPD in different occupations.

Speakers from the Engineering Council, the Institute of Personnel and Development, the Royal College of Nursing and the universities of Oxford and Warwick gave presentations. This volume reproduces, with minor revisions, five working papers which were circulated at the symposium. It concludes with a commentary on key issues which emerged during the discussions of these papers.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sheila Galloway's paper highlights under four broad themes recent and current issues concerning CPD: terminology and territory; professions and professionalism; ways of thinking about professional learning, and the individual and the organisation. It provides three illustrative examples and proposes a possible research agenda.

The rhetoric associated with 'lifelong learning' and 'continuing professional development' is questioned, as are some of the assumptions and current understandings of these terms. Can CPD be seen as a form of social control? Definitions of CPD are given from different occupations and from the literature, some existing CPD schemes are outlined, and key players and interest groups are indicated.

Noting briefly the more influential sociological analysis of the professions and professionalism, it is clear that many historical definitions of 'professionalism' are no longer appropriate. Pressures facing professional people are discussed, as are the uncertainties facing professional bodies, and recent trends in CPD.

We need to develop more effective ways of conceptualising professional learning. Descriptions of reflective practice or situated learning help in defining what is observed and offer some conceptual tools but they have their limits and are not easily operationalised. The growing attention to learning outcomes makes the ability to recognise learning and articulate tacit knowledge extremely important. These are skills to be developed.

If professional practice is the source of learning, what frameworks and cultures will best facilitate it? Individual responsibility for professional development has been widely emphasised but the matter of who invests in CPD is inescapable.

Learning within the organisation is seen as cost-effective and professional expertise cannot be gained from courses alone. Small firms however find it difficult to invest in CPD, and there is evidence that most medium-sized firms lack an education, training or development policy.

Examples which illustrate some of the above issues are taken from the responses of a solicitor, a nurse and an engineer commenting on their professional learning. The paper concludes with five research questions which merit empirical investigation.

IS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE WITHIN A CENTRALLY CONTROLLED EDUCATION SYSTEM?

Richard Pring's paper first reviews how the former clear separation between the role of the civil service and that of professionals meant that the position of the latter was powerful. From the early 1960s, however, the 'secret garden' of education was under threat. In the 1980s, the Schools Council's role as a professional forum was ended, the inspectorate reduced, and successive acts tightened central control of education and eroded professional autonomy.

Between 1979 and 1997 market forces and consumerism came to dominate educational provision; under the labour administration the justification for increased governmental control has been the drive to define standards and raise performance in schools.

Changes in education are located against similar changes in the management of public services more generally. The public service agreement means that school development plans must address centrally set targets, but these are implemented by local education authorities, schools and individual teachers.

One recent theme has been the need for more modern management and progression structures in teaching and more adequate recognition of what teachers do. Setting targets implies CPD to meet those targets, and the Department of Education and Employment's new pay and award structure carries professional development implications. Here, recent research on the effective teacher is proving influential; the Department's consultation on professional development focuses on delivery mechanisms, not educational values and purposes.

Yet education remains a contestable concept. The language of education in official documents draws increasingly on that of the business world. Current metaphors change the moral context for education: 'educational practice' has itself been redefined, and management terminology, dominated by 'ends', 'targets', and 'competences' contributes to this.

In a broader sense, however, education can still be seen as the engagement with and communication of ideas to young people through a 'conversation' or interchange between teachers and learners which takes account of individual thoughts, beliefs and values. Against such conceptions of teaching, performance-related pay is based on a limited notion of the 'professionalism' of the teacher. 'Educational practice' necessarily involves making 'professional' judgements about the value of what is taught as well as the effectiveness of the teaching method.

The shift which has taken place over time in the management and control of teaching, especially apparent in the language adopted, has resulted in a narrower and impoverished conception of education and teaching.

FROM ACCOUNTANT TO VALUE-ADDED BUSINESS ADVISOR: TRAINING PROFESSIONALS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Keith Hoskin, Campbell Jones and Fiona Anderson-Gough characterise accountancy as an elite profession: it attracts large numbers of well-qualified new graduates, top firms make substantial profits, and individuals can earn high salaries. In addition, leading accountancy firms and professional bodies are promoting a 'super-elite' image. 'Big Five' firms recruit to training contracts those with high educational qualifications, with little regard for degree subject.

CPD can be considered in relation to accountancy professional bodies (and their regulatory role), firms (adapting to increased specialisation and demonstrating more diversified 'added value' or consultancy services) and individuals.

Competition between firms makes specialist expertise paramount, for which professional development is essential. Firms which lead in such provision have been followed by others, thus extending CPD opportunities overall. Competition between professional bodies has led to changes in CPD portfolios. Employer-sponsored MBAs (to retain high-flyers) are being countered by post-qualification awards from the professional institutes (and non-credential briefings and up-dating). Whilst such competition has stimulated CPD, another explanation is that increasing CPD is part of the battle for professional jurisdiction. It may also be seen as an indicator of the knowledge society, or as further evidence of the 'diploma disease'.

Empirical research confirms that new graduates are exposed to specialist rather than general practice. Leading firms encourage young accountants to take on the identity of the firm above all, whilst the professional institutes seek to maintain an accountancy identity, alongside increasing specialisation.

CPD has taken on a more strategic role, apparent in the 'crisis' over the adequacy of training. The professional bodies are revising their curricula, aiming to produce more critically aware and well-rounded practitioners. CPD, central to future specialisation, now presupposes a less conservative pedagogy than formerly. Against these tensions and paradoxes, questions are posed about the possible future development of CPD.

Taking up discussion in the symposium about professionalism and management, these authors recognise in the revised version of this paper that it is possible to characterise CPD as being compromised by managerial priorities, but note that 'management' cannot necessarily be opposed to 'professionalism'. Is it particular kinds of management which restrict autonomy? Indeed, can professionalisation be entirely separated from managerialism? In accountancy specifically, such conflicts and connections are seen as complex and as worthy of further analysis.

TOWARDS LIFELONG LEARNING IN HEALTHCARE

Sue Hinchliff uses the Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry to highlight messages about CPD for healthcare professionals. She sets education, training and CPD within a lifelong learning scenario which takes careful account of practice contexts. Knowing in practice implies both theoretical and practical components, and the ability to be reflexive. The principles and underlying values are set out on which lifelong learning is based. Interdisciplinary learning and collegial support relationships are seen as central in healthcare.

The benefits of CPD are discussed, for the individual, the employer, the profession and society, including patients and clients. Professional development should be flexible and responsive to professional needs, practice-focused, and should take account of practitioners' learning needs and value their expertise. Moreover, CPD has resource implications which must be recognised.

Professional development in this sector is often informal, occurring in the workplace; the features of workplace learning are discussed, as well as initiatives to support such learning. A culture of support for learning is important, as is access to information technology and also the need to help people discriminate about the value of different types of knowledge available to them.

Within the health service, clinical governance gives additional responsibilities to nurses, midwives and health visitors to maintain their professional knowledge and competence. Action points relevant for health professionals are outlined and the paper ends by drawing attention to the role of employers in supporting learning and development and in establishing a culture which will nurture professional learning.

CPD IN ENGINEERING: NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

Chris Senior observes that in the engineering professions, education and training have long been key elements in professional formation. Technological, business and employment imperatives have shaped professional development, mainly in structured activities, often for academic qualifications. Less formal activities, though encouraged, have posed problems in recording and assessment for CPD records.

Engineers increasingly focus on the results and outputs of CPD. The Engineering Council, along with the professional engineering institutions, defines engineers' roles and responsibilities: the key competences required of a chartered engineer are summarised. Companies also use assessment of competence as part of their business strategy: these may include professional and technical, process-based, and value-based competences.

Knowledge management implies an organisational culture of continuous improvement. Meanwhile, CPD schemes must enhance professional engineers' individual ownership of and commitment to CPD, and they require guidance to help them manage their professional development.

The Engineering Council's 1999 Survey of Registrants shows over 50% undertaking more than five days of employer-sponsored training annually, and over 18% of chartered engineers have a master's degree. Some age differences emerge: over 60% of registrants have a record of their development (over 77% of younger registrants). However, only 30% have CPD plans (44% of under-34 year-olds).

The European Federation of National Engineering Associations gives guidance based on the UK experience in establishing a CPD code. The sharpened focus on competence based outputs calls for better support systems for engineers, in which all the partners associated with CPD will have a role.

KEY ISSUES FROM THE DISCUSSION

Is CPD partly a new form of social control? How do we respond to CPD as a mechanism for linking professional activity to a prescribed agenda? What are the values and purposes of CPD in any particular field?

Does 'professional development' for highly qualified people differ from development opportunities for people with lower formal qualifications? What are the critical distinctions? Discussion confirmed how in professional activity, elements such as altruism, social responsibility, moral authority and professional value systems are said to play an important role. Increasingly, also, 'career development' is becoming a focus, especially for younger professional people, in assessing CPD options.

We need to develop more adequate ways of conceptualising CPD which enable us to move beyond the conventional distinctions between academic/theoretical and practice-based/experiential knowledge. What is the basis for professional learning and professional expertise? How can we usefully analyse the factors affecting professional learning and how can such analysis inform CPD planning? How can organisations, large and small, nurture professional expertise?

Formulating what is meant by 'informal learning', and developing the ability to 'articulate' what is designated as tacit knowledge are further conceptual and practical challenges. All forms of learning are socially constructed, including 'tacit knowledge'. Such knowledge and learning may not be predictable, measurable, or

even rational. Meanwhile, learning within a group or team is for some professional people the predominant style of development. Investment in professional development, moreover, is made by many parties, and is not only financial. Is the 'managerial' model inevitably in conflict with the 'professional' model, with CPD the contested terrain on which these tensions are resolved?

Finally, we should distinguish between macro-, meta- and micro-level initiatives, experience and outcomes, and recognise that there may be differences between these levels. This may be especially important in locating CPD against organisational performance. Because of (or perhaps despite) the diverse backgrounds of those attending the symposium, there was a fruitful interchange of ideas. Participants with operational priorities and those with research priorities found areas of common concern, even if their purposes and often their discourse differed. The old theory/practice dichotomy is being superseded: theorising takes place in practice situations and insights relevant to practice emerge from research-led activity. Areas for research emerging from the discussion include:

a) CPD and the 'market' for professional services, including the public sector;

b) the ways in which different managerial and professional objectives are being resolved in relation to each other;

c) the potential development of 'profession-like' approaches further down the occupational spectrum;

d) the role of CPD in underpinning professional standards, and

e) 'professional learning' and the circumstances which best support it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Symposium on 'Continuing Professional Development: Looking Ahead' took place in May 2000 at Pembroke College, Oxford, organised by the ESRC's Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE). The support of the Economic and Social Research Council is gratefully acknowledged.

This symposium brought together over fifty invited participants: researchers working on the SKOPE programme, other researchers who had particular expertise in professional development, and practitioners, especially representatives of professional associations and other agencies who had a responsibility for continuing professional development. Speakers from the Engineering Council, the Institute of Personnel and Development, the Royal College of Nursing and the universities of Oxford and Warwick gave presentations. The aim was to cross disciplinary boundaries and to explore overlaps and shared concerns. We wanted to learn from the research evidence, from other discourses, and from what is happening in terms of continuing professional development in different occupations.

The presentations provided a basis for discussion. The five papers in this volume, by academics and practitioners, are, with some minor amendments, those which were presented at the Symposium. They should be read as working papers, collected here in order to reach a wider audience and to sustain the dialogue begun at that event. They reveal a range of perspectives on professional development, some assumptions surrounding the term, diverse ways in which it is interpreted, and some possible future directions for research and development . The final paper in this volume summarises key issues which emerged during the discussions.

The lively engagement of participants at this event was appreciated as were their comments following it. Particular thanks go to Dr Kate Seers, Head of Research at the Royal College of Nursing Institute, for her balanced rapportage at the end of the day.

I should like also to express thanks to Ken Mayhew (Director) and Ewart Keep (Deputy Director) of SKOPE, for their involvement in the planning of this event, on the occasion itself, and for drawing attention to issues which arose in the discussions. I appreciated also the secretarial support for the Symposium provided by Fiona Chavner and Lesley Williams.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACLEC	Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
ENB	English National Board
EUSCCIP	European Project for the Use of Standards in CPD for Construction Industry Professionals
FEANI	European Federation of National Engineering Associations
IT	Information Technology
NHS	National Health Service
PROGRES	Professionalisation of Graduate Engineers Project
RCN	Royal College of Nursing
SARTOR	Standards and Routes to Registration
UKCC	United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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1 Introduction

The aim in this paper is to seek some generic features which recur in different ways in the analysis of continuing professional development in contrasting professional settings. To do so I shall draw on the literature on continuing professional development and related fields, and on existing studies, including research which I have conducted in the past six years. Each of the other papers in this volume provides information from a particular professional world and considers issues concerning continuing professional development in that context. My task is altogether different.

Because this paper draws selectively on a series of separate research projects,[1] details of the methodology are not given here. In order to focus on issues and challenges in CPD, four broad themes will be highlighted in Sections 2-5, respectively:

- Terminology and territory
- Professions and professionalism
- Ways of looking at professional learning
- The individual and the organisation.

These themes are followed in Section 6 by three perspectives on learning which illustrate some of the issues raised in the paper. In addressing CPD policy and practice we can distinguish three main groups:

- the policy community (government and those who are part of the public policy development structures and systems regarding education and employment)
- the practitioner community (including professional associations and bodies, whether regulatory or not) and
- the research community (especially the social science community).

The paper keeps at arm's length the latest details and, indeed, the inevitable rhetoric of policy statements about continuing professional development. Instead it examines some fundamental research approaches to understanding 'the professions' and 'professional learning'. Finally, since this symposium aims to 'look forward', I conclude briefly by extracting from these themes a research agenda which centres on the more important dilemmas in the field which would merit further empirical study.

2. *Terminology and Territory*

First let us view *continuing professional development* against the hinterland of other initiatives and other styles of learning, where it is sometimes a sub-set of a wider theme, sometimes a parallel: it can be seen as a component of lifelong learning; it encompasses but is wider than 'training'; it is more than 'learning on the job'; and more also than learning in formal educational settings. It may be seen as the prerogative of the professional and associate professional occupations (as defined by the official Standard Occupational Classification). A plethora of terms has evolved in the past twenty or so years for concepts, principles and practices related to learning. In different contexts people refer to training, INSET (for teachers), professional development, or continuing professional development, the last distinguishing from the more instrumental, often job-specific or even task-specific 'training'.

Lifelong learning can encompass continuing vocational education or vocational lifelong learning (Moseley and Field, 1998), implying work-related learning which may take place in formal educational locations, but also includes learning on the job, from colleagues, in informal ways, and even from situations and opportunities beyond the workplace. In speaking of *vocational education and*

training, we focus more directly on demonstrating competence, i.e. proving what someone can do at work rather than validating his/her knowledge. Without getting into the debate about the role of National Vocational Qualifications at higher levels (Hyland, 1994), we can say that 'becoming competent' plays an essential part in continuing professional development, but this is not the whole of the story.

Lifelong learning, adopted as a 'master concept' by UNESCO in 1970 (Tight, 1996, p.35-36), points to self-directed learning which overlaps continuing professional development. Despite the popularity of the concept and its widespread adoption, understandings of lifelong learning still vary: Edwards *et al.* (1998, p.15) observed how lifelong learning was sometimes seen as a sub-heading of training as on the DfEE's web site but it would be equally possible to subsume education and training under lifelong learning, and see the term as a 'rallying cry for stakeholders wishing to generate political, social or financial support'.

Similarly Eraut (1997) noted how some organisations had 'rebranded' their activity to be better positioned in relation to policy priorities and streams of funding. Certainly any material on CPD is now likely to refer to lifelong learning, but we still need to pursue more exact understandings of continuing professional development itself. Others point out that the notion of lifelong learning can be used as a form of social control, and it would certainly be easy to argue that continuing professional development is used in the same way, especially where CPD has become obligatory or mandatory, and where stringent frameworks for recording and monitoring are in place.

As regards the wider context, the contemporary lexicon also gives us the 'learning society', the 'knowledge society', the 'knowledge economy', and 'knowledge management, each of which merits greater attention than is possible in this paper. These concepts too are contestable (Young *et al.*, 1997, p.530). Rees *et al.* (1997) argue that discussion of the learning society has been dominated by human capital theory which abstracts economic behaviour from social relations: 'participation in lifetime learning cannot be understood in terms of the narrow calculation of utility maximization' (p.486). They propose a 'much more nuanced social theory of lifetime learning than that offered by the dominant discourse of

human capital theory' (p.494). Individuals are not, they remind us, always guided by economic rationality when they make decisions about education and training.

Some of this discussion is helpful when we think about continuing professional development, especially during a period when national policy statements increasingly stress the individual's responsibility for continuing professional development. For instance, these authors deploy the concept of 'learner identity', quoting Weil's (1986) formulation of learner identities as concerning how adults

> come to understand the conditions under which they experience learning as facilitating or inhibiting, constructive or destructive. Learner identity suggests the emergence or affirmation of values and beliefs about learning, schooling and knowledge. The construct implies personal, social, sociological, experiential and intellectual dimensions of learning, as integrated over time.

Section 4, on professional learning, will suggest that we need to understand better such affective components of learning processes, rather than settling for more simplistic measurements of CPD and its effects.

Whilst recognising the important links possible in this galaxy of terms, this paper cannot pursue terminology further, nor give space to deconstructing the significance of the many related terms and territories. However 'CPD' can be detached from the jargon, and at its simplest, we can note five definitions of continuing professional development, three from professional bodies and two from the academic literature. Although the style varies, the common strands and shared territory are evident.

Developments in engineering, the law and nursing

From the Engineering Council's 3rd edition of Standards and Routes to Registration (SARTOR), comes the definition of CPD as:

> The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge, understanding and skill, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the individual's working life.
>
> Engineering Council,1997, p.29

This document concerns primarily the routes to achieving chartered engineer status, but it was a turning point for the engineering professions in making CPD a requirement for the first time. Minimum requirements for CPD to encourage engineers to maintain their competence throughout a working career are expressed in terms of processes of planning to identify learning needs from a very early stage. For qualified engineers, CPD, previously voluntary, had become 'obligatory'. SARTOR made it clear that these plans and records are a professional obligation for all engineers, not only the newly qualified.

A telling sidelight on the engineering context, from the same year as the 3rd edition of SARTOR, comes in a paper entitled 'A View from Industry', which recommended to the Engineering Council a strategy which would include

> 2000 Introduction of Mandatory CPD
> 2005 Statutory Licensing
> 2010 Assessment of Learning
> i.e. knowledge and skills relative to a competence framework
> 2020 Accreditation of specialist competences
> 2025 Licence to practise accredited specialisms
>
> Francis and Dawkins, 1997, p.20

In a sector where the professional associations have long held a regulatory position, it is striking to see such voices from industry suggesting this 'indicative timetable'.

In a very different professional context, the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct (ACLEC) formulated CPD for lawyers in its Second Report on Legal Education and Training as:

> Regular, structured activity designed to supplement the practitioner's experience by enhancing any aspect of his *[sic]* professional competence at all the different stages of his career.
>
> ACLEC, 1997, p.15

The Law Society's scheme for compulsory CPD from 1985 on was extended gradually and from November 1998 even the most senior solicitors were brought into

the scheme. At the time of the ACLEC discussions, the requirements were for 16 hours of CPD annually in the first three years of practice. In later years this could be aggregated as 48 hours over a three-year period, with the requirement technically backed by the sanction of removing the licence to practise.

Here again, a professional body with a long established regulatory role is seen to be tightening its requirements so that CPD becomes a priority not only for recently qualified solicitors, but throughout a career. Whilst this might appear to present further hurdles to solicitors, the Law Society drew attention to the numerous activities which may be undertaken in the normal course of professional practice and which can be characterised as CPD. In this way, an apparently more demanding scheme is tempered by wider definitions of professional learning.

The Royal College of Nursing's definition of CPD had by 1999 evolved to be:

Continuing Professional Development

- Improves your nursing practice and care of patients and clients
- Develops your professional and personal knowledge, skills, experiences and understanding
- Helps you gain confidence and maintains it
- Values your learning and helps you demonstrate it to others.

Definition provided by the RCN for Galloway and Winfield, 1999

The statutory CPD obligation for nurses was introduced by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC, 1994). To maintain registration, a nurse must meet the 'Post-Registration Education and Practice' requirement of five days of study in each three-year period, and keep details of his/her professional development in a personal professional profile. Definitions of what constitutes 'continuing professional development' are even wider than the activities accepted in the law and engineering. Along with the obligation, attention is given to encouraging individuals to shape their own professional development. The RCN formulation operates with a time allocation, but has moved towards an outputs-based approach, emphasising the benefits of CPD, focusing on the outcomes of learning and the recognition of its value to professional practice.

Each of these examples from three major professional bodies demonstrates a tightening of control over the past five to ten years. Allaker and Shapland (1994) reviewed the many different types of professional association, and it is clear that those which are regulated by law and royal charter are in a different position from some more recently formed groups. By introducing the new SARTOR requirements, by including senior solicitors in compliance with CPD, and by writing CPD into the Post-Registration Education and Practice to maintain a nurse's registration, professional development has been put unavoidably on the agenda in these substantial professional sectors. An interesting question now will be to record how frequently in practice any potential sanction is actually employed.

Moreover, for other associations, the competition to recruit and retain members can be a serious consideration: Watkins (1999) comments on the tensions facing both the traditional and the emerging groups, as they introduce additional requirements but must avoid alienating members. Nevertheless, he concludes that 'it is likely that minimum CPD requirements will soon be established across all professions'.

It is also interesting to set against the activity of professional bodies the current initiative of a funding agency, the Arts Council of England, to set up a CPD framework for the cultural sector through a process of consultation and persuasion. The resulting scheme encourages organisations to opt in in order to access financial opportunities; the approach taken in this initiative reflects the quite different role and responsibility of a funding agency as distinct from a professional body vis-à-vis CPD.

Finally, two definitions which emphasise rather different features. For Houle (1980), also quoted by Welsh and Woodward (1989), CPD was:

> The ways in which professionals try, throughout their active lives of service, to refresh their own knowledge and ability and build a sense of collective responsibility to society.

The employer or organisation is not prioritised here (other than 'service'), and there is no mention of a systematic approach or framework, but a strong sense of professional authority and social purpose. In comparison, Madden and Mitchell's

1993 definition, deriving from a research project conducted in the early 1990s, is widely used:

> The maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers, according to a plan formulated with regard to the needs of the professional, the employers and society.

Given the concern over the relationship between monitoring skills and knowledge and resulting organisational performance, it is worth noting the extent to which these definitions do or do not specify the concerns of the employer or organisation.

Key players

Having placed continuing professional development against this backcloth of interwoven educational, training and development activity, and having refocused attention on what 'CPD' means, this section reviews some of the different groups which have a stake in promulgating and affect the emergence of continuing professional development activities. A still useful resumé of key 'actors' is the following:

> The individual professionals;
> Their managers and employers;
> The various providers or CPD facilitators;
> The professional bodies;
> The clients or the general public; and
> Controlling bodies such as local and central government.
>
> Welsh and P. Woodward, 1989

A more recent list of four 'stakeholder groups' gives us:

> Governments, parastatal and professional bodies, and supranational bodies such as the UN, European Union and international trade and professional associations;
> Employers;

Individuals;
Providers of CPD services.

I. Woodward, 1996, p.10

Whether we describe these categories as 'stakeholders', 'interest groups' or in other terms, they are the key players. My preferred list would demarcate seven interest groups, and simply focusing on any two or three of these hints at the potentially complex relationships which can influence continuing professional development:

The state and quasi-governmental agencies
Professional associations and bodies
Trades unions
Employers
Higher education institutions and commercial training providers
Clients and consumers: the 'public'
The individual professional

One issue here concerns the diverse organisational frameworks which characterise professional bodies: I have distinguished trades unions as a category, but some professional bodies also have a trade union role. (Other distinctions include whether they are regulated or not, whether they have chartered status, whether they have a disciplinary role.) Each of the interest groups indicated above has its own agenda and priorities regarding continuing professional development.

Note also that if we see CPD exclusively in terms of those who are in employment (as employees or self-employed, including members of partnerships), this enables us to focus on the company and organisational performance. But in restricting attention to those in employment, we disregard wider socio-economic concerns at the levels of the state (which strives for 'inclusive' rather than 'exclusive' policy), the professional associations (with obligations to their entire membership), and the individual professional (who may at different stages be unemployed, working as a volunteer, not working for family reasons, or be an employee or self-employed).

Such caution is particularly pertinent when considering groups such as unemployed professional women returners, so-called 'portfolio people' who move frequently between short-term contracts, or those working in areas where unpaid activity is widespread as an entry strategy, as in the cultural and creative sector (Consortium, 1997; Roodhouse, 1999).

From this brief review of the terraine and key players, I turn in Section 3 to some key aspects of the professions as they relate to continuing professional development.

3 *Professions and Professionalism*

Historically, sociologists have taken many routes to conceptualising the professions; some of which could be summarised as:

- Listing the characteristics and traits of a profession (Greenwood, 1957; Goode, 1957)
- The process approach (Wilensky, 1964)
- Semi-professions (Etzioni, 1969); bureaucratic professions (Mills, 1956; Leggatt, 1970)
- The power approach (Freidson, 1970; Johnson, 1972)
- The proletarianisation debate (Braverman, 1974; Ozga and Lawn, 1988)
- The professional project (Larson, 1977).

Larson's conceptual approach, though now somewhat dated, was revitalised in the 1990s by Witz (1992) and Macdonald (1995). Her analysis, based on an examination of the process of 'occupational closure', has particular value in that it obliges us to attend to both social and economic features in considering how an occupation successfully establishes its exclusive position and comes to be designated a 'profession'. She explores the dual aspects of the claim to a body of knowledge and the creation of professional markets built on that knowledge. This perspective also

emphasises how professional status, once achieved, cannot be taken for granted, but must constantly be consolidated and reasserted. In recent years, CPD has been a part of that consolidation and reassertion of professional prestige. For this reason I have described it as a very modern way of promoting the 'professional project' (Galloway, 1998).

If 'professional' once implied an elite group of autonomous individuals, this view cannot now be justified. Moreover, most professional people now work in environments which are far less predictable than formerly. Roche (1999, p.41) quotes Le Boterf (1994): 'être un professionel, c'est aimer la complexité et l'incertitude'. Such complexity and uncertainty has provoked new analyses, among them the reworking of the debate over proletarianization in education; these centre on 'traditional professionalism', 'deprofessionalization' and the 'new professionalism' of teachers (Avis, 1994; Hoyle, 1997; Harris, 1997). Meanwhile Broadbent *et al.* (1997) entitled their edited volume *'The End of the Profession? The restructuring of professional work'.* Their contributors refute the notion of the death of the professions, but confirm that major changes are under way. (Moreover the everyday use of the word 'professional' makes it an increasingly problematic term: what for instance, do we understand when we hear reference to the 'professional politician'?)

Numerous pressures now affect highly qualified people in all fields, and the following list is partly informed by existing reviews of such pressures (e.g. Allaker and Shapland, 1994; Watkins, 1999). We can see these stresses on professionals in terms of:

- Increased accountability and regulation by government in both public and private sectors, constraining the individual's autonomy and control over his or her working situation.
- Increased monitoring and review by employers through performance reviews and targets.
- Competition in global markets, which continues to grow as the use of information and communications technology (ICT) becomes an integral

part of professional activity and e-commerce emerges to fashion new market forms.

- Reduced trust in professional judgement, as in major public health crises (such as BSE), and uncertain advice (as on the MMR vaccine), as well as the outcomes of high profile cases of miscarriages of justice and of malpractice.
- Consumerism (with 'Patients' Charters' and similar statements) and readiness to litigate.
- Better informed clients prepared to question the professional, but also clients who recognise when they cannot assess professional services and therefore require formalised guarantees of competence and high quality work.
- Changing patterns of employment, including more 'flexibility', less secure contracts, and an increasingly blurred boundary between employee status and quasi-consultancy/self-employment.
- More multi-disciplinary working environments, involving negotiation within a team where professional demarcation may have to be either blurred or re-defined.
- Growing expectations of client care from professionals in service organisations.
- Increased need for professionals to develop management skills.
- Complexity and pace of technological change, bringing the imperatives to keep abreast of developments in ICT and to decide how best to use these professionally.
- Short life of academic, technical, specialist knowledge, with the need to continually update and extend one's knowledge and skills, since the young professional's 'toolkit' no longer guarantees competence for more than a few years.

We could of course see professional status in terms of the 'closed shop', or the

protectionist clique, in contrast to the early sociological stress on the ethical dimension and especially professional altruism or at least social responsibility, which underpinned the relationship between professional people and their clients (and the wider society). These elements and the trust which they engendered have been progressively eroded, and the basis of that trust has changed.

When the highly qualified person asks - How can I maintain the confidence of clients, consolidate my business position and maintain professional status? – CPD has become one part of the answer. For the professional association also, wishing to sustain public trust, support members and enhance prestige, measures to support CPD now play an increasingly important role. Traditionally, professional bodies were characterised by:

- A list or register of members, who
- met certain initial entry qualifications (education, recognised experience and socialisation)
- complying with a code of conduct, as well as
- other quality control requirements.

However, the uncertainties faced by individuals have their parallel in the tensions and strains which professional associations and bodies currently face. These include:

- Fragmentation, coping with the tendency for specialist sub-groups within the profession to form 'splinter' groups and detach from the parent body.
- Emergence of new associations, serving the needs of newly defined occupations, and possibly attracting members of existing associations: there are now 400 large and over 90 small 'professional' bodies (Watkins, 1999).
- Encroachment of what were formerly seen as para-professional or ancillary groups, where certain (more routine) operations can increasingly be carried out by others (sometimes with technological assistance), reflecting changing roles in, for instance, the legal and health professions.

- Growing numbers of young professional women members.
- 'Coerced self-regulation' (Shapland, 2000, p.3) as certain professional bodies become more 'entangled with the machinery of government', taking on what can be seen as an intermediate regulatory role.
- The European Union and wider globalisation, affecting the role of country-based professional associations: multi-national companies and internet provision of services diversify competition and increase the importance of international professional networks (Evetts, 1995).

Allaker and Shapland (1994) noted the degree to which professional bodies monitored each others' activities with a 'sideways glance', predicting that the differences between them would reduce as the professional associations grew more alike. Alongside the issues reviewed above, there are certain widely recognised trends in continuing professional development. The most common features are:

- Structured CPD frameworks have become commonplace.
- Previously, membership was gained through a process of initial qualifications, recognised experience and socialisation. Increasingly, the requirement to produce evidence of prior learning and of CPD plans is being introduced at the very earliest stages of a career.
- Voluntary CPD is being replaced by obligatory, and (in some cases) mandatory (i.e. essential to retain the right to practice) CPD as a requirement for continued membership status especially in professional bodies with substantial regulatory responsibility, like those discussed in this paper. Watkins (2000, pp. 18, 24) notes this trend from 'voluntary' to 'obligatory', compulsory' or 'mandatory' CPD. (It remains to be seen whether the same will apply to less established associations with little or no regulatory function in the market for the professional services concerned.)
- CPD schemes of professional bodies have been characterised (Rapkins, 1994) as based on either benefits or sanctions.

- From the more traditional inputs-based schemes, with a recommended allocation of hours (or other unit) of CPD activity, the tendency is towards encouraging individual members to define the learning outcomes of their continuing professional development. This is a much more sophisticated and demanding undertaking.
- Some support mechanisms introduced by professional bodies to assist in recording CPD include professional development portfolios, both paper-based and using software - as by the College of Radiographers and the Museums Association, a wide range of mentoring schemes, and innovations such as the competency trials on the internet introduced by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

The proliferation of professional associations has extended attention to CPD requirements. Marquand (1997, p.144) writes of 'status-hungry new professionals facing the impervious path-blocking superiority of the old' and Shapland (2000, p.6) observes how some recently established associations are keen to 'emphasise the adequacy of their regulation', adopting stringent requirements:

> New bodies want to become like old professional bodies as soon as possible, and to be seen as such - the force for continuity in professional bodies' actions. But in fact they want to be seen as even more professional. And so old professional bodies have to follow, to take on these new demands for regulation and explanation - the force for change.

The guidance and support outlined above is necessary because whilst it is simple to assess inputs by calculating the time spent on a course or other professional development exercise, it is much more problematic for people to identify what they have learned and review how that is being incorporated into their professional practice. Before we can determine what CPD means for an organisation, or begin to capture its effect on organisational performance, we need to be able to formulate how professional learning takes place. This matter is considered in the next section.

4 *Ways of Looking at Professional Learning*

The most powerful recent influence on thinking about professional learning has probably been the work of Schön (1983, 1987), which begins with a critique of technical rationality as a suitable epistemology for professional practice. His starting point is the often unarticulated nature of the forms of knowledge used in practice: 'competent practitioners usually know more than they can say and exhibit a kind of "knowing-in-practice" most of which is tacit' (Schön, 1983, p.viii). Conventionally, professional practice was seen as the application of formal knowledge, but he sees the context of practice itself as a source of new knowledge.

Moreover, the 'technical-rational' model defines professional practice in terms of a process of problem-solving, but this disregards the process of problem-setting; the 'reflective practitioner' constructs knowledge by experiencing problems *in situ,* and responding to them, from hypothesis through testing and reflection. This can involve both immediate reflection-in-practice, and a retrospective reflection-on-practice. Above all, there is 'professional artistry' in confronting 'indeterminate zones of practice - uncertainty, uniqueness and value-conflict' (Schön, 1987, p.6).

A key feature of professional work is the extent to which practitioners face non-routine situations in which the mere application of rules will not suffice. They must instead make judgements based on a complex amalgam of knowledge, skills and expertise accumulated over time and in diverse operational contexts. In a much-quoted metaphorical passage, Schön describes the 'swampy lowland' of professional practice, where 'messy, confusing problems defy technical solution'. The practitioner can chose to remain safely on the 'high ground' and solve 'relatively unimportant problems', or alternatively 'descend to the swamp of important problems and non-rigorous enquiry' (Schön, 1987, p.3). Despite uncertainties surrounding the concept of 'reflective practice' and how it can be operationalised (Copeland, Birmingham, de la Cruz and Lewin, 1993) Schön's work has been extremely influential and gives purchase on many aspects of CPD.

Other conceptual approaches which offer ways of understanding professional learning in practice would be through Stenhouse's (1975) proposed 'extended

professional', premised on the idea of the 'teacher as researcher', which can transpose to other professional settings, in action research, or through the work of Kolb (1984) who defined learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience'.

More recently, Lave and Wenger (1991) and Chaiklin and Lave (1993) have developed radical reformulations which move away completely from conventional notions of learning as a passive process of digesting factual information. They stress how learning is essentially social and involves participation in communities of practice along with complex processes of incorporating theory into everyday work practice. The fundamental aspect of 'situated learning' is the process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' which:

> provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice. This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills.
>
> Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29

Starting from notions of apprenticeship, and exploring the interaction between 'newcomers' and 'old-timers', they trace 'the gradual process of fashioning relations of identity as a full practitioner' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.121). There are pointers here to understanding certain aspects of CPD. Though the focus is on learning, not career, links can be made with Dreyfus, Dreyfus and Athanasiou's (1986) categorisation of novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert (see also Benner, 1984).

None of these theoretical approaches is simple to operationalise, but in different ways each offers conceptual tools applicable to continuing professional development. These ways of understanding learning are at the other extreme from 'happy hour' end-of-course evaluation checklists on a single A4 sheet. There is a place for such exercises, but it is a restricted one. We have seen how the complexity of professional learning and the obligation to record evidence of learning outcomes

provides a challenge to individuals, professional associations and researchers alike. With the growing emphasis on learning outcomes and how they can be recorded, and increasing pressure being put on professional people to recognise the learning which takes place in practice situations, some of these ways of formulating learning processes merit further attention.

Putting professional work at the centre of CPD activity means designating practice as the source of learning, not just the location in which the learning takes place. How can an organisation arrange for such new knowledge to be generated? Can such stimuli be systematised, recorded and validated? In a study of learning from other people at work, Eraut *et al.*, (1998, p.41) identified several types of organised support for learning but found numerous negative examples of companies where organised support for learning was lacking, and noted also that among the positive examples, very few derived from 'organisation-wide strategies or initiatives. Most were relatively informal and initiated by middle managers, colleagues or the learners themselves'.

If we are concerned about skills, knowledge and organisational performance, and specifically about how continuing professional development can address these concerns, such observations are relevant, along with their concluding comments that

> A major reason for the prevalence of learning from other people was that this knowledge was held by individuals rather than embedded in social activities. While some knowledge was firmly embedded in organisational activities, other knowledge *was* located only with a small number of individuals - often only one. Thus we can consider both a continuum from tacit knowledge to knowledge in the form of written propositions, and a continuum from knowledge which is individually situated, to knowledge which is organisationally situated. Any theory of a learning organisation has to take this variety into account.
>
> Eraut, Alderton, Cole and Senker, 1998. p.48

This section has pointed to some challenges in conceptualising professional learning and to the need to find ways of providing learning situations which will sustain the individual's professional development and relate to the priorities of the organisation as a whole. This question of how to capitalise on individual learning for the benefit of the organisation is one which recurs in Section 5.

5 *Issues for Individuals and Organisations*

In assessing the value of continuing professional development to individuals and to organisations, we return repeatedly to matters of who is responsible, whose commitment is called upon, and who pays. Overall, policy documents in the late 1990s brought to the fore and began to incorporate the notion of individual responsibility (Kennedy, 1997; NCIHE, 1997; Fryer, 1997). *The Learning Age: A Renaissance for a New Britain*, puts this explicitly as: 'Individuals should invest in their own learning to improve their employability, professional competence, and earning potential or for leisure' (DfEE, 1998, p.26). Such sentiments sit neatly alongside historic interpretations of professionalism, but as we have seen, that traditional autonomy of the 'professional' person is now rare indeed. And the 'costs and benefits' of continuing professional development to the individual or the company are much higher, more diffuse and difficult to evaluate than those associated with job-specific training (such as a short one-off training course on a new software package which an employer introduces throughout the firm).

The first and most visible cost is the charge made by the provider, whether a commercial agency or consultant, higher education institution or in-house unit, and whether the input is from a menu or 'tailor-made', on or off the premises. The second element is the cost of professional cover as by, for instance, the GP's locum or the supply teacher (Galloway and Morrison, 1994). Nursing clearly exemplifies how staff shortages, shift working, seasonal peaks and insufficient agency staff can in practice reduce professional development activity, but such features are evident in many professional fields. In other contexts, the cost is not that of a substitute professional, but that of lost earnings because of the fee-earner's time out of the office, particularly felt among high street solicitors. Given these pressures, on-the-job learning, harnessing the resources available within the organisation, has a particular appeal.

If CPD through learning at work seems to offer a way of cutting costs, it is also a response to recent organisational change; Ashton (1998, pp.62-63) points particularly to more flexible forms of organisation, fewer layers of authority, an increased stress on teamwork and multi-skilling. Noting that in the UK and the USA

the trend has been for training departments to shrink and for less off-the job training to be undertaken, he identifies three areas where new skills are required: problem-solving, teamworking and elementary management competencies, but observes that 'these are not skills or competencies which can be readily acquired from one-off courses' (p.62).

Though our focus is on skills and knowledge at professional levels, this review of learning at work raises issues which are relevant. Some of the skills prioritised above relate to Schön's 'swampy lowland'. Developing such skills, as Ashton hints, may require structured CPD, processes of accretion and accumulation (as in Vygotsky's (1978) theory of proximal learning), through recurrent professional development opportunities and associated coaching (Joyce and Showers, 1980, 1984). In teaching, these issues have been apparent since the in-service training explosion of the late 1980s and early 1990s: It was soon recognised that 'quick-fix INSET' (Hopkins, 1989) was never the way to engender complex learning which can only be described as professional development rather than training (Burgess *et al.*, 1993).

In practice, employer support for training/CPD activities in small and medium-sized enterprises has long been an issue:

> it is known that in small firms especially, it is not considered a worthwhile investment to devote money and staff to CPD. It is much more common for professionals working in such small firms to pay for and undertake CPD without any support from the employer.
>
> Welsh and P.Woodward, 1989, p.9.

Studying medium sized enterprises, Storey (1997) reported that 76% of the firms responding had no education, training or development policy despite the majority of respondents believing that education, training and development was critical to a company's performance, and despite seeing staff development as a company responsibility. The conclusion is that there was recognition of the language of good practice in this field but there was an inadequate idea of the purpose of the investment being made and the nature of the benefits to be expected. Companies were not planning and evaluating their education and training investment as they would expenditure in other areas. This study confirms the need for medium-sized businesses

to be strategic about investment in staff development, linking it to organisational needs and aims. Without such an approach, they risk investing in training and professional development which is of little advantage to the firm itself.

In addressing the issue of the relationship between the individual and the organisation, and the balance between them of commitment to and investment in CPD, the size of the organisation is a key element. I arge organisations benefit from economies of scale, diversity in their in-house expertise, more varied opportunities for job shadowing, rotation, and mentoring arrangements, and often a performance review or appraisal system, all of which can facilitate continuing professional development processes. Size of the organisation is indeed an important element in any analysis of corporate commitment to CPD.

It is only possible here to touch on how some of these crucial issues influence continuing professional development. To illustrate at the micro-level some of the themes explored in this paper, Section 6 discusses three contrasting examples of individual views on different forms of professional learning.

6 Three Views of Professional Learning

To demonstrate how some of the issues discussed previously present in practice, this section gives three vignettes from a series of CEDAR research projects. The evidence comes in turn from a lawyer, a nurse and an engineer. The lawyer exemplifies the professional person seeking lifelong learning, not just training, finding it in a postgraduate higher education course, and assessing the value of it to his professional practice. The nurse epitomizes the professional lifelong learner, in an example which illustrates both learning from a colleague at work and a high degree of personal motivation to take that learning further. The engineer testifies to the value to the company of investment in staff development.

i) The lawyer

In his late forties, this senior partner, whom I have called Anthony, gives an 'expert' (Dreyfus *et al.* 1986) perspective on continuing professional development. Formerly the managing partner of a successful provincial firm based in a busy city but

with five additional offices in local towns, he had decided to look for something beyond his daily professional life, observing that his own feelings at the time could not have been unusual: 'I'm sure that a lot of solicitors....are struggling around, thinking in their mid-forties, "How am I going to get to sixty?"'.

Anthony's answer was to register for a part-time degree. The fees were paid by the firm, but he had to commit several weekends to residential courses, as well as regular private study in his own time. Traditionally, solicitors have had little chance to undertake postgraduate studies in the law partly because of the complexity of initial vocational training in their twenties after the first degree in order to get started on a legal career. Anthony selected his part-time course with care:

> My choice of a further degree was that it was wide... I wanted to use the chance of going back to university not just for the practical qualification of LLM but also to have a bit of fun with the law broadly relating to what I was practising but not rigidly confined to my caseload.

Embarking on the two-year part-time course, he found there were surprises in store:

> My course is full of the work 'reflection'... I was very struck with how different education is now from how I remember it... I liked having my preconceptions about what it was going to be like shattered.

Besides thinking in a new way about his own learning, he was soon rethinking elements of professional practice:

> I'm quite struck by how much of what I'm learning is of application here. For example, the notion of providing clients with cost estimates and time estimates in litigation is still quite foreign. Most people find that difficult and answer it in the rather unhelpful proverbial way of saying, 'How long is a piece of string?' One of the purposes of the course is to persuade people that that is no longer a sensible and/or acceptable answer in legal services. I have quite quickly moved from a position where I thought those estimates were impossible to give or...weren't worth the paper they were printed on, to being convinced that they can be done moderately accurately and serviceably and should be done.

The course brought unforeseen benefits:

> I value enormously the friendships and just the experience of studying, 'co-studying' with another group of people who I never knew about until a year

ago. Now, we've become quite good friends... we ring each other up and help each other on the course and refer work to each other occasionally.

Comment

The criteria behind Anthony's decision are worth noting: first, he refers to the academic qualification as a 'practical' one. Secondly, he sought 'fun' from the whole endeavour (and little has been written about the enjoyment which may or may not be a part of professional development). Finally, these studies should be relevant to professional practice, but had to challenge him beyond his daily working experience. This example demonstrates how the work of Schön has affected approaches to course delivery, encouraging more active approaches to thinking about and articulating professional learning processes.

What had this investment meant for his colleagues and the firm as a whole? Did it affect the performance of the organisation? It did have direct relevance to the practice, as in the introduction of estimating fees and the new professional contacts and possible business. Yet overall, though personally stimulated by the experience, Anthony was cautious about the degree to which the firm could be said to have benefited from his undertaking the degree. It could have more fully exploited his learning and shared elements of it with other partners and employees. The key issue here (which was outside the remit of this research project) concerned how far the organisation had been able to incorporate this individual professional learning into its institutional expertise. The data suggest that this was only happening in an *ad hoc* way, even though the investment by the firm had been sizeable.

ii) The nurse

In 1999 CEDAR staff conducted a pilot study for the Royal College of Nursing which explored particular methodologies designed to help identify nurses' CPD needs (Galloway and Winfield, 1999). The research design used focus groups and diaries to give access to areas of nurses' professional lives and thinking which would otherwise have been inaccessible to researchers. This second example concerns a nurse working in a city hospital whom I call Jane. She is a theatre practitioner who qualified as a nurse in 1995, having previously worked in various laboratory posts. Working four long shifts each week, not always in the same

location, she encounters many varied practice situations. One of Jane's CPD diary entries noted an incident where a patient in theatre required an operation using a tourniquet. She herself had a pre-existing interest in the use of tourniquets, and she recalled in the diary that she had completed an assignment on this as part of her English National Board Course 183.

In this case, a training officer working in the unit mentioned some recent research on the use of tourniquets in patients with sickle cell disease (which did not apply to this particular patient). The diary format asked for a note of further CPD needs and plans arising from the incident. Jane noted her 'needs' as being to do a search of the literature regarding the use of tourniquets in sickle cell patients. Her 'plan' was to ask the training officer about the research he had mentioned. With the reference, she found the article and brought a copy of it with her to the second focus group two weeks later, with further references marked on it which she was about to follow up. On this occasion she gave the other nurses present a very technical account of the issues surrounding the use of tourniquets in such patients, and summarised the reasons for the two preferred procedures.

Comment

This example conveys the power of actual practice situations to stimulate professional learning. It points also to the role of other professionals in the workplace as a source of learning, and to the strength of individual commitment as a driver for professional development. Jane's response to the specific new knowledge was to relate practice to the whole clinical area. Her diary records how she drew on former knowledge and experience, but also planned to seek further information. The explanation given at the second focus group showed sustained follow-through. This was professional learning in action: self-motivated, incremental, showing an already competent practitioner extending her expertise. Jane had the skills and the energy to extract from the situation what was important for future practice.

What did this instance of individual professional development mean for the organisation as a whole? This is far from clear. Further opportunities to exploit her new knowledge and skill would depend on the theatre rota. Jane's learning remained invisible; there was no suggestion of any channel to share it with others (except for

those in the research focus group). In following up herself she demonstrated a strong 'learning identity', and it was interesting to see this in the light of a comment which she volunteered at the initial focus group: 'I'm quite burnt out with formal studying, but I'm happy to carry on with the informal work for myself and *my* development'.

iii) The Engineer

Among the many professional people interviewed in this series of research projects, the most positive picture of commitment to CPD at organisational level came from an associate director in the UK office of a world-wide design and construction company, who directly linked the corporate view of education, training and CPD to the company's success:

> One of the key factors that has allowed us to generate work at reasonable levels in quite difficult times has been that we have differentiated ourselves from other design organisations and the key differentiator has been the quality of the design... We recruit the best people and train the best people.
>
> The way that careers develop within this organisation is [that] the achievement of chartered status is seen as a very definite milestone... There are a number of opportunities open once you've reached that position which are closed if you're not a chartered engineer.

In this organisation in-house courses were run by the personnel department on non-technical topics, sometimes with an external facilitator. Manufacturers, contractors and suppliers gave lunch-time technical ('not sales') presentations. Engineers themselves delivered sessions about their current projects, on techniques being introduced, as when new European directives affected their practice. The in-house graduate programme was accredited by an established professional body and the company had recently sponsored two employees to complete doctorates on business-related topics. The director concluded:

> If we didn't go in for CPD and didn't keep ourselves as a leading edge for the profession, we wouldn't attract the work we do and we wouldn't be able to demand the fee levels that we do for the work.

Comment

This very positive view was not typical of the interview data overall, and the resources available for the research project precluded interviewing employees at less

senior levels in the company. But its atypicality throws into relief some important matters: this was a very large company employing engineers, architects, designers, accountants and other specialists. However many engineers (and other professional people) work in small and medium-sized enterprises or in small 'cost units' within larger organisations where tight training budgets and operational priorities compromise systematic support for professional development. This question of how SMEs sustain CPD is a key issue for further research, as I noted earlier.

The examples of the solicitor and the nurse return us to some reservations expressed in the paper about interpretations of lifelong learning and assumptions about the transfer of learning, formal or informal, in ways that are advantageous to the organisation. In the third example we glimpse how a company which does invest in CPD may assess the value of that commitment. This is far from being a cost/benefit analysis; it is a qualitative assessment which points to matters such as career structures, support systems and organisational culture.

This very up-beat and committed view of professional development within an organisation and its contribution to the company's business success also raises the matter of size of firm as a critical variable.

7 Future Research Themes.

The concept of continuing professional development, like that of lifelong learning or the learning society, is contestable. Researchers need to go behind the rhetoric of policy statements to the actual experience of individuals and in organisations, to work towards better understandings of professional learning and of the ways in which this may in practice contribute to both the professional development of the individual and the performance of the organisation. Suggested conceptual approaches from a range of disciplines have indicated some possible frameworks for analysis. From numerous potential research questions, I would prioritise the following:

- Which outcomes justify an organisation's investment in CPD?
- Which outcomes justify an individual's commitment to CPD?

- How can we record and validate the role of informal professional learning?
- What means are there of identifying more effectively how professional practice provokes learning?
- How can SMEs sustain CPD?

CPD has become a growth industry, but there remain many uncertainties about its justification and evaluation. The suggested research priorities address some of those uncertainties. Other researchers and practitioners, however, may have different concerns, or may frame these questions about continuing professional development in rather different ways which nevertheless link with the investigation of skills, knowledge and organisational performance. It is the purpose of this symposium to explore such dissonance and commonalities associated with continuing professional development.

Note

[1] Research on CPD in engineering, the law and arts administration was conducted for the University of Warwick's Continuing Vocational Education Development Fund allocated by the Higher Education Funding Council of England. This involved a series of small-scale qualitative projects designed to give insights on specific issues concerning Continuing Vocational Education and CPD. The pilot study on nurses' CPD needs was the empirical component of a year-long project conducted for the Royal College of Nursing. I am grateful for the opportunity to use data from these various projects.

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IS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE WITHIN A CENTRALLY-CONTROLLED EDUCATION SYSTEM?

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1 Context: The Changing Nature of Public Services

When I entered the civil service in 1962, there was a relatively clear distinction to be made between the role and expertise of the public servant and that of the professional adviser. The public (or civil) servants would not claim expertise in the substantive elements of the service they were administering. Rather did their expertise lie in making the machinery of government work – in providing the necessary funding for that service, in ensuring that there was adequate recruitment of the professionals, in providing the legal or regulatory framework within which those public services (education, health, social security, the police, etc.) might operate most effectively. It was not the job of government to say what exactly should be done or how it might be carried out. That was a job for the professionals.

The professional, therefore, exercised immense power. In education, for instance, the Secretary of State would have instant access to the 'professional view', given by the Chief Inspector. The inspectorate (*Her Majesty's* Inspectorate, thereby emphasising their independence of government) were a body of about 450, covering the whole country, acting as the 'ears and eyes' of government certainly, but gathering the evidence about the state of education both locally and nationally which would inform the judgements of the chief and staff inspectors as they advised government on educational policy. Great care was taken to say only that which was justified by the evidence gathered. In the 1970s, for example, the annual reports on local education authority expenditure were hard hitting, comprehensive accounts of the state of our schools in relation to the resources made available.

The post-war period was characterised by this clear separation of government from the substance and control of the professional service offered. Thus, Dr Marjorie Reeves, Emeritus Fellow of St Hugh's, recalls her conversation with the Permanent Secretary, Reginald Maude, when in 1947 she was appointed to the Central Advisory Committee for Education. In answer to her question concerning the responsibilities of the Advisory Committee, Maude replied that it 'was to be prepared to die at the first ditch as soon as politicians try to get their hands on education'.

When, in 1962, the Ministry of Education established a Curriculum Study Group, there was an outcry from the teachers. They protested at the encroachment of government into what the Minister of Education referred to as 'the secret garden of the curriculum'. Quickly the government retreated and established, instead, in 1964, the Schools Council – the majority of whose membership were teachers. The job of the Council was curriculum research and development with a view, not to dictating what should be taught or how, but to informing professional judgement.

Perhaps the 'philosophy' underpinning the Council was best expressed by its architect and first joint secretary, Derek Morrell, a quite exceptional career civil servant. The purpose of the Council was

> to democratise the processes of problem-solving as we try, as best we can, to develop an educational approach appropriate to a permanent condition of change
>
> (Morrell, 1966)

Such a democratic approach was seen to be essential because the direction and consequence of change were unpredictable and because there was decreasing consensus over the values which should direct that change.

> Jointly, we need to recognise that freedom and order can no longer be reconciled through implicit acceptance of a broadly ranging and essentially static consensus on educational aims and methods.

Hence, teachers and their professional advisers were in the forefront, not only in determining the means to achieve certain ends, but also in questioning and reshaping the ends or educational purposes themselves. Essential to such questioning

was a professional forum (and its regional and local counterparts), supported by research and development, which debated the very values and purposes themselves.

But the Schools Council survived less than 20 years. That period coincided with a growing suspicion of professional knowledge and power and by an increasing encroachment of government on territory previously controlled by the professionals. The Fulton Report on the civil service, published in 1968, questioned the continued role of the civil servant as the intelligent amateur. There was a need for greater expertise, a more proactive involvement in the services administered. In education, the retreat over the Curriculum Study Group was to be temporary only. The investment in education and training was too great to be left unaccountable. There were too many examples of professional failure, one notable example being what came to be known as the Tyndale Affair (see Auld Report, 1976). The need to raise standards of performance was too pressing to be left to the professionals, given the increasing economic competition from abroad.

The 1980s, therefore, saw a dramatic shift in the balance between the government and the professionals. The Schools Council was closed. The inspectorate was decimated. A range of legislation (culminating in the Education Reform Act of 1988 which established a national curriculum and national assessment) restricted the scope for professional judgement, gave central direction to educational change and reformed the governance of schools accordingly. The Chief Inspector became a political appointment.

However, these quite radical changes in balance between state and professional in education were a reflection of the reform of public services more generally – initiated, though by no means shaped, by the 1968 Fulton Report on the civil service – requiring a different approach to public administration.

These changes in balance came to be directed, certainly within the Conservative administration from 1979 onwards, by a 'neo-liberal' trust in market forces. The emphasis lay in 'consumer choice', in contrast with professional expertise. Hence, the national system of assessment and the regular and systematic reports by the newly formed OFSTED provided the public data on which parents would be able to exercise choice of schools. Money would follow those choices.

Unpopular schools would wither, popular ones flourish. But, of course, such choice would be exercised within a highly regulated framework of a centrally controlled curriculum.

Although on the surface little seems to have changed under the Labour administration with regard to the inherited arrangements (centralised curriculum, national assessment, regular inspections, league tables based on performance criteria), faith in the market no longer prevails. Instead, the same arrangements are now seen to be essential to the increased emphasis upon accountability to government which provides the money and which takes on a much greater degree of responsibility for defining standards and for ensuring performance improvement according to those standards. Thus, the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act sets the framework within which the government is able to determine the standards by which schools and their teachers are to be judged, and the targets which need to be met if those standards are to be achieved. Hence, there is a much greater control over public service through a range of measures, the latest (in education) being 'performance related pay'. Thus, arrangements previously devised to support market choice are now employed to ensure greater management control and manipulation by government. This is a quite major, and often unacknowledged, shift which affects profoundly the nature of, and scope for, continuing professional development.

This change in the management of public services is explained in a series of government White Papers from HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office: *Modern Public Services in Britain: Investing in Reform* (1998, Cm 4011); *Public Services for the Future: Modernisation, Reform, Accountability* (1998, Cm 4181); *The Government's Measures of Success: Output and Performance Analyses* (1999); *Modernising Government* (1999, Cm 4310) – and many others. This is important to note. Too often the recent developments in education which affect profoundly the role of the professional and of professional development and which I shall describe in detail in the next section, are not seen within this wider context. Furthermore, what is sometimes referred to as 'new public management' is fairly widespread in the world at large (see, for example, McKevitt, 1998, on developments in Australia and New Zealand, and Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, on the United States).

The principles underpinning this new approach to management have been identified by Foster & Plowden (1996) – quoted by Faulkner *et al.* (1999) – as including

- separating purchasing public services from production;
- serving consumers rather than bureaucratic political or producer interests;
- using market pricing rather than taxes;
- where subsidising, doing this directly and transparently;
- extending competition;
- decentralising provision;
- empowering communities to provide services;
- setting looser objectives, and controlling outputs rather than inputs;
- bringing about deregulation;
- prevention of problems, rather than cure, through planning.

In the educational service, we see these principles applied to different degrees and in different ways: different 'producers' of public services such as professional development and inspection (including private businesses) bidding for custom of schools; the more explicit statement of the 'consumers'' rights (see for example the Code of Practice in the DfEE Consultation Paper, 2000, *Professional Development*); the process of bidding for custom, as in the institutions' (universities' as well as private providers') proposals to provide professional development, where cost as well as quality is taken into account; and so on.

Most significant, however, is the 'public service agreement' whereby funding is provided, ultimately by the Treasury to the Department of State concerned, and then 'cascaded down' to the ultimate providers of the service. Thus, in education, targets in terms of outputs are established centrally (for example, the proportion of 16 year olds who will gain five GCSE at A to C) and 'cascaded down' to local authorities who incorporate these into their development plans, which themselves 'cascade down' to the schools, who also have development plans to be approved. Of course,

there is a further tier of 'cascading' as the schools' development plans are cashed out in terms of the expected performances of individual teachers. In this way the government determines the standards and sets the targets, but assigns responsibility for achieving those targets to the local authorities, the schools and the teachers – what Mark Freedman refers to as 'imposed contractualism' (see Faulkner *et al.*, 1999, p.11). And the rewards or punishments are provided in terms of funding – and teachers' pay.

2 *Reforming Teachers' Pay*

In their book *Paying Teachers for What They Know and Do*, Odden and Kelley argue that the traditional way of paying and rewarding teachers is simply out-dated. It reflects a view of management which has been abandoned elsewhere in private, public and voluntary services. And it is partly responsible for the comparatively low pay of teachers, especially after several years of service.

That 'traditional way' is for teachers to be placed on a single salary schedule, albeit with some compensation for extra responsibilities. Thus, teachers, from the moment they join the profession, can expect a predictable progression up the scale or schedule until they reach the 'ceiling' – irrespective of merit, hard work, or need. Indeed, further progress in terms of salary would require leaving the classroom for a more administrative responsibility. According to Odden and Kelley, this ill-serves the recruitment, retention, morale and incentives of teachers. Moreover, it reflects a rather hierarchical view of school management. By this is meant that, in such a system of 'teacher compensation', there is a clear division between those whose job description is to manage the school and those (on the single salary schedule) who are managed.

By contrast, management and compensation in other employments reflect much more what the employees can do and have achieved in terms of devolved responsibility and remuneration. Management is 'flatter', employees or teams of employees receive due recognition for their efforts and successes, and their proven

professionalism is recognised in the assumption of greater responsibility for practical and strategic decisions.

Odden and Kelley argue, therefore, that teaching should be rather like that: greater recognition, through an appropriate funding mechanism and through the devolving of management responsibility, of what teachers can do and have achieved. There is, in their view, an urgency to move in that direction because

> the tax-paying public, the business community, and policy-makers still pressure the education system to produce results and to link pay – even school finance structures, more broadly – to performance (p.11)

The pressure arises from the felt need to raise standards, to improve 'productivity' in relation to these standards, and to hold teachers accountable (both positively where they have succeeded and negatively where they have failed) for their professional work.

To enable this to happen, there needs to be much greater precision in what teachers are expected to achieve – productivity targets, if you like. But this in turn requires the setting of reasonable targets – the clear statement of what good teachers of subject X and level Y should be able to achieve. And there should be the continuing professional development to enable teachers achieve these targets. There must be an investment in training.

In anticipation of this shift in the management of schools and the compensation of teachers, the National Board for Professional Teaching Practice (and other professional organisations in the USA) have spelt out in much detail what these targets, within specific subjects and for specific age-ranges, should be.

The position is clearly summarised.

> Shifting pay increments from years of experience and loosely related education units to more direct measures of professional skills and competencies, adding a mechanism that undergirds the need for ongoing training and assessment of instructional strategies, and perhaps adding group-based performance bonuses are compensation changes that could reconnect how teachers are paid with the evolving strategic needs of new school organizations, calls for teacher professionalism, and the core requirements of standards-based education reform. Providing salary increments for teachers

> who are certified by the NBPTS as accomplished expert teachers, a policy increasingly adopted by states and districts, is a direct competency-based pay element and represents specific movement on teacher compensation reform.

Odden and Kelley's argument has been influential both within and outside the United States. Certainly it has had a profound effect upon the British Government which has been advised by Odden and which is now swiftly introducing 'performance related pay' to schools in England and Wales. The government Green Paper, *Teachers Meeting the Challenge of Change* (DfEE, 1998), followed by a 'technical consultation document' on pay and performance management, and a further consultation document, *A Fast Track for Teachers* (DfEE, 1999), spell out the policy which is being implemented at speed. The proposals might be summarised as follows, starting with the words of the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

> Part of this investment (in education) is for a new pay and award structure for the teaching profession ..... the present pay arrangements reflect a different era. They do not sufficiently reward good teachers for excellence in the classroom. Many teachers reach a scale point beyond which they cannot progress, however good they are, unless they take on management responsibilities.
>
> (DfEE, 1998b, p.3)

As, indeed, with Odden and Kelley, this changed pay and reward structure is connected positively with a 'new vision of the profession', including professional development. The details of this 'new vision' can be summarised as follows:

> (i) *Better rewards for teachers.* There will be two pay ranges for classroom teachers, with a 'performance threshold' at the end of the first range. 'Crossing the threshold' will depend on 'assessment of performance against agreed objectives'. Thereafter, annual assessments of performance, reflecting 'new professional expectations', will determine the speed with which teachers progress or do not progress up the second pay range. Furthermore, consistent with the recognition of team work in any successful organisation, there will be a School Performance Award Scheme for

successful teams of teachers and whole schools, in recognition of yearly improvement and 'high results'.

(ii) *Improving leadership.* Extended pay scales will reward 'strong and effective leaders' (headteachers and their 'management teams', including 'advanced skills teachers'), though with 'fixed-term contacts' to link rewards to the achievement of agreed objectives. "Fast track teachers' will be identified early (even before or during their training) and given supplementary contracts, incentives and professional development to help them on their way to leadership.

(iii) *Better skills and staff development.* Progression up the pay scales will be supported by a contractual duty for all teachers to keep their skills and subject knowledge up to date, together with an appropriate qualifications framework, a 'Code of Practice' for providers of professional development and a new inspection programme to ensure 'value for money'.

(iv) *Initial training.* More flexible routes into teaching (employment-based, related to diagnosed needs for specific competencies, school led) will emphasise performance and practical skills, and will require nationally set standards of teaching competence and of performance in numeracy, literacy and information technology.

3 Professional Development

According to Odden and Kelley, rewarding performance (and punishing non-performance or failure) makes sense if, following regular appraisal, there are opportunities for teachers to obtain the professional competencies necessary for performing according to standard or meeting the 'output targets'. Therefore, the DfEE (2000) has produced a further consultation document on professional development – such development being defined in terms of what makes a good, and progressively better, teacher within a framework of professional development. Such a definition is based upon the research commissioned from Hay/McBer (2000). Let me, therefore, summarise briefly what Hay/McBer have to say about the effective teacher.

From a wide and systematic gathering of evidence (questionnaires, interviews, observations, etc.) the researchers provided a 'model of effective performance'. This consisted of 16 characteristics split into five groups concerned with professionalism, capacity to think analytically and conceptually about teaching, planning and setting expectations, leadership qualities, and the capacity to relate to others.

In many respects, this is a valuable piece of research, and can, and no doubt will, serve as a useful document for continuing professional development. But (and here I anticipate what I shall say later about the nature of and scope for professional development within the more centralised management of public services) the model of the effective teacher (in terms of skills, knowledge and qualities) is set out in terms of the National Standards determined by the government. It provides the basis on which teachers are to be assessed for progression through the main professional grades, through the new 'performance threshold' and beyond, into the Advanced Skills Teacher grade, and thence to those of senior management and leadership.

Therefore, the Secretary of State, in his introduction to the consultation paper on professional development, feels confident in saying that 'professional development is all about making sure that teachers have the finest and most up-to-date tools to do the job' (p.1). Professional development is about equipping teachers (giving them the knowledge and skills – and personal qualities, where possible) to 'deliver' improvement in schools and to raise standards (by which is presumably meant performance according to agreed standards).

The framework within which performance is measured according to standards (where output targets are to be defined) is comprehensive: at the levels of initial training (where already many detailed standards have been defined and against which training institutions have been assessed), of newly qualified teachers, of the main career threshold, of subject leadership or middle management, of advanced skills teacher, and of school leadership (heads and their deputies). Although the document states that 'schools and teachers are best placed to know what development activities will meet these particular needs and raise standards of teaching and learning in their school' (that is, not the traditional inservice providers), such professional responsibility is confined to the means of achieving the ends, to the tools of efficiency

and effectiveness, not to the deliberation over the educational values and purposes themselves. They, as it were, have been cascaded from above. To help with the professional re-equipping, opportunities will be given to help teachers – including an extra school-based inservice day for the introduction of performance related progress and small bursaries to subsidise the costs of professional development.

However, what is remarkable about the consultation paper and about the Hay/McBer research into teaching, upon which it leans, is that there is no account given of education. The professional development of professional educators assumes that what it means to educate someone (anyone – irrespective of social context or individual aspirations and capacities) is uncontroversial – and, indeed, is clearly established in the nationally established targets, though refined or tweaked occasionally as problems or new needs become apparent (as in the recent requirement, reflected in the requisite targets, for citizenship education).

Education, however, is a 'contestable concept' in many ways. There is no consensus within society on what is to count as an educated person; the link between social and economic needs, on the one hand, and individual needs, on the other, is complex and varied; the struggle to make sense or to find value in life will not be uniform. And the recognition of this was reflected in Morrell's establishment of the Schools Council and in his recognition of the role of teachers, in their professional capacity, to deliberate the ends and purposes of their teaching (the values which these embodied) as well as being equipped with the tools for reaching the ends.

The new management of public services, the central setting of targets, the cascading of these targets eventually to individual teachers no longer has room for that. As Faulkner *et al.* argue (albeit in the context of the administration of public services more generally),

> Judgements which professional public servants have made, or could reasonably be expected to make, on a basis of their own authority, experience and expertise, are increasingly becoming matters of departmental guidance, ministerial direction, or even statutory duty
>
> (*ibid*, p.4)

There was to be, and is, little scope for professional judgement in the establishment of standards or targets. All the wisdom is at the centre – in the hands of government. In this we see, I believe, a necessary restriction of what we mean by education, and thus a shift in what is meant by professional responsibility, professional judgement and thus professional development. This is reflected in the changed language of education as it is encompassed within the new management of public services.

4 The Language of Education

How we see the world depends upon the concepts through which experience is organised, objects identified as significant, descriptions applied and evaluations made. The choice of metaphor changes our vision of what is important or how a situation is to be understood or what is to count as an appropriate assessment. The Odden and Kelley proposal, in particular its implementation by government, assumes a distinctive language through which to describe, assess and evaluate an 'educational practice' and thus the professional engagement within it. Such a language draws upon new metaphors, and through these metaphors the concept of a profession changes. Professional judgement and development take on different meanings. Teachers and 'their managers' perceive what they are doing differently. What previously was seen to be of significance to professional development is frequently demoted to the trivial and irrelevant.

The danger might be illustrated as follows. The Permanent Secretary responsible for implementing these changes in Britain, in giving an account of the nature and purposes of policy changes, said that we must 'think in business terms' – and thus draw upon the language and practices of the business world. That means that we look at those changes, as engineered by government for the improvement of standards in schools, as a 'quality circle' in which one defines the product, identifies the means for producing that product, empowers the deliverer, measures the quality, empowers the client, and develops partnership between the clients, the deliverers and the managers of the system such that there might be a continuous review of targets and means for achieving those targets. The 'product' is defined in terms of a detailed,

outcomes-related curriculum. The 'process' (or 'means' for reaching the targets) is spelt out in terms of 'effectiveness' in the production of this 'product'. The changed management structures 'empower the deliverers' of the 'process' to satisfy the needs of the respective 'stakeholders'. The 'measurement of the quality' of the 'product' is provided through a detailed assessment (a 'testing against product specification'). 'The empowering of the clients' comes about through the creation of choice, which is achieved through the availability of public data on effectiveness and through competitiveness amongst the 'deliverers of the product' so that the clients can exercise choice. And 'partnerships' are created for 'stakeholders', 'deliverers' and 'clients' to work together in developing the 'effective processes' for producing the 'product' (which is generally defined by someone external to the 'process'). The management of the whole process is conducted by what Mark Freedland (1999) refers to as 'imposed contractualism' – the cascading down from above of 'productivity targets'.

The language of education through which we are asked to 'think in business terms' – the language of inputs and outputs, of value-addedness, of performance indicators and audits, of products and productivity, of educational clients and curriculum deliverers - constitutes a new way of thinking about the relation of teacher and learner. It is a way of thinking which was non-existent until comparatively recently. It employs different metaphors, different ways of describing and evaluating educational activities. But, in so doing, it changes those activities into something else. It transforms the moral context in which education takes place and is judged successful or otherwise.

The effect of this new language is not a matter for empirical enquiry alone, for that which is to be enquired into has become a different thing. So mesmerised have we become with the importance of 'cost efficiency', 'value for money', 'productivity' and 'effectiveness' that we have failed to see that the very nature of the enterprise – of an 'educational practice' - has been redefined. Once the teacher 'delivers' someone else's curriculum with its precisely defined 'product', there is little room for that *transaction* in which the teacher, rooted in a particular cultural tradition, responds to the needs of the learner. When the learner becomes a 'client' or 'customer', there is

no room for the traditional apprenticeship into the community of learners. When the 'product' is the measurable 'targets' on which 'performance' is 'audited', then little significance is attached to the 'struggle to make sense' or the deviant and creative response.

Indeed, the metaphors taken from management do not seem to embody values other than those of efficiency and effectiveness. It is as though (within the discourse of management) there are two quite different sorts of debate: that which concerns the efficient means to the attainment of clearly defined targets, and that which concerns the targets towards which we should seek to be efficient. The result is a language of 'ends' and targets established outside the process of being educated - the endless lists of competencies, the 'can dos' which might be objectively measured, the professional skills on which teacher are to be assessed if they are to progress up the 'salary schedule'. 'Education', then, becomes the means to achieve these ends, and it is judged essentially by its effectiveness. If it is not effective, then it should adopt other 'means', based on the kind of research which relates means to ends - that is, what the teacher does to what the learner can produce as a result. 'Means' are logically 'separated' from the 'ends', and the quality of the 'input' is measured simply by reference to the success or otherwise of the 'output'.

Think, however, in terms of a different set of metaphors. Oakeshott, in his essay 'Education: its engagement and its frustrations', speaks of education as the introduction of young people to a world of ideas which are embodied in the 'conversations between the generations of mankind'. Through that introduction the young learner comes to learn and appreciate the voices of poetry, of philosophy, of history, of science. There is an engagement with ideas, a struggle to make sense, a search for value in what often appears dull and mundane, an excitement in intellectual and aesthetic discovery, an entry to a tradition of thinking and criticism. As in all good conversations (especially one where there is such an engagement with ideas and where the spirit of criticism prevails), one cannot define in advance what the end of that conversation or engagement will or should be. And, indeed, the end is but the starting point for further conversations.

Teaching, therefore, becomes a 'transaction' between the teacher and the learner in which the teacher mediates the different voices to those who are seeking to take part. That conversation between the generations, embedded within literature, drama, oral traditions and narratives, artefacts, social practices, works of art, etc., speak to the needs and aspirations of the young people, but at different levels and in different ways. The art and skill of the teacher lie in making the connections between the *impersonal* world of what is bequeathed to us in libraries, etc. and the *personal* world of the young people, thereby creating an *interpersonal* world of informed and critical dialogue. The fruit of such efforts will be reflected in thoughts, beliefs and valuings which are diverse, unpredictable and sometimes slow to mature.

Different metaphors, therefore, provide different understandings of an 'educational practice'. Business metaphors make possible a management of that practice in terms of 'targets', 'productivity', 'effectiveness', 'professional competence', 'professional appraisal', 'client choice' within a 'market setting', which the metaphor of 'conversation' does not. Indeed, the business metaphor provides the framework of management control, as 'targets' are 'cascaded' from above, and as pay is related to the achievement of those targets. But such business terms provide an impoverished vocabulary for that transaction between teacher and learner as both engage with the richness of the ideas which we have inherited and through which we struggle to make sense of the physical, social, moral and aesthetic worlds we inhabit. The engagement between teacher and learner, as they endeavour to appreciate a poem or to understand a theorem or to solve a design problem or to test out a favourite theory or to resolve a moral dilemma, is both the means and the end. For, as Dewey argued, the so called 'end' becomes the 'means' to yet further thinking - the pursuit of yet further goals. But that is probably why Dewey for so long was on the index of forbidden books in teacher training - a different language from that of management and control.

5 *Professionalism and Professional Development*

'Professional' is a very elastic term and no one definition can quite capture its quite complex usage. Footballers and second hand car salesmen refer to themselves as professionals, thereby hoping to improve their status in the eyes of the public.

But such improved status is parasitic upon certain general, if ill-defined, expectations of a member of a profession. These might be summarised as: the possession of expertise as a result of training and experience; some element of self-regulation in terms of accountability, discipline and membership; and ethical standards in terms of service to the public. In the case of the last criterion, the *professional* teacher would provide advice and help to the young learner on the basis not of self interest or profit, but of the assessed needs of the learner. In the case of the first criterion, the *professional* teacher would claim expertise not simply on the best available ways of attaining some goal, but on the capacity to deliberate about the goals themselves. Indeed, the transaction between teacher and learner is, more often than not, a deliberation about values, an engagement with 'the best that has been thought and said', an exploration of what is really worthwhile. To reduce such a transaction to the delivery of someone else's targets demeans the professional role as that has been exercised by able and committed teachers.

Odden and Kelley argue, as does the British Government, that 'performance related pay', supported by a detailed analysis of the relevant skills and competencies, enhances rather than diminishes the professional nature and stature of teachers. In a sense it does. The competent classroom manager might be said to be more professional than the incompetent one. But at the same time it is a limited notion of 'professional'.

An educational practice is a transaction between a teacher and a learner within a framework of agreed purposes and underlying procedural values. Such a transaction respects the learning needs of the learner, on the one hand, and, on the other, mediates those aspects of the culture, which are valued and which meet those needs. Such aspects include a tradition of literature and literary criticism, the narratives picked out by history, the understandings of the physical world embodied within the different

sciences, the appreciation of the social worlds reflected in the arts. And, of course, such traditions, narratives, understandings and appreciations are by no means static. They are the product of deliberations, arguments, criticisms within and 'between the generations of mankind'. Many teachers – of English, say, or of science – see themselves as participating in such a tradition, indeed its custodians. They speak from a love of their subject and wish to convey that. They believe that the understanding enshrined within that tradition is important to the young people as they seek a deeper appreciation and knowledge of their lives and of the challenges within them. The teachers want, as it were, to bring the young people on the 'inside' of those traditions. Hence, it would be wrong to characterise such teaching activities by reference to some 'products' or set of 'targets' logically disconnected from the activity of teaching itself. The goal, aim, value or purpose is embodied within the practice. One might refer to an 'educational practice' as a particular form of life, a way of thinking, a mode of valuing, into which the learner is being invited or even seduced.

The role of the teacher in such a practice requires deliberation about the aims to be fulfilled in teaching this or that to these particular learners, as much as it does the best ways of achieving these values or aims. The teacher is constantly deliberating and making judgements about the value of what is taught as well as the effectiveness of a particular method. Such a way of seeing an educational activity is to be contrasted with one in which an activity is geared simply to the production of something else – something only contingently or even arbitrarily connected with the activity itself. In pursuit of imposed targets (against which teachers are to be assessed) professional judgement is increasingly limited to deciding upon the most efficient means to the achieving of those targets. Hence, the perceived poverty of those assessments of teacher performance which reduce professional judgement of teachers, immersed in their respective disciplines which they seek to communicate to the students, to the lists of competencies through which limited targets are reached.

Elliott (1991) illustrates this theorising about practice from the Ford Teaching Project which he directed and which involved over 40 teachers in 12 schools. The issue they were addressing was that of methods of teaching which promoted pupil

enquiry and discovery. Pupil enquiry and discovery were an alternative mode of learning from that which normally prevailed in classrooms. What starts off with an aspiration, a rather general idea, certain educational values, needs to be translated into a set of practices. And these practices need to be examined critically in the light of those values. Do they, in fact, embody or make sense of the original aspiration? How far do they depend on classroom organisation or previous experience? Do these practices have unintended and unacknowledged effects on the rest of the curriculum? By sharing the problems, the questions and the tentative conclusions, the teachers were able to build up a body of *professional* knowledge, tentative perhaps, but knowledge which had withstood critical questioning. This professional knowledge was developed through the collection of relevant data, the interpretation of this data, the critiquing of the interpretation in the light of the evidence, the reflection upon the values which were implicit within the practice. Thus, there is a constant interpretation, testing, re-interpretation, critical scrutiny, moral reflection – an ongoing process which feeds into and is put to the test in the teaching.

This sense of the teacher as a professional – deliberating about the value of proceeding in this way rather than that or about the most appropriate way ahead for particular students – is lost in the more limited picture of the teacher, assessed according to the preordained performances required by those who set the targets. Indeed, this capacity for moral deliberation and for professional judgement about the relevance of general theoretical knowledge to the peculiarities of particular circumstances is interestingly omitted from the Hay/McBer research on which the current conception of professional development depends.

6 Conclusion

In this paper I have briefly outlined a changing view about the management of public services – and thus about the relation of such management to professional practice. The change is (a) from a management which provided the framework only, leaving very largely the professionals to determine the nature of the service offered, (b) through a management which sets the rules and framework within which a more market driven shaping of public services was to emerge (thereby diminishing the

professional role of the teacher, (c) to a management which set the 'targets' and exercised control through the reward or retribution of the performance of those employed to deliver those targets. A new management-speak reflects this quite radical shift in the management of public services – a language of target setting and outcomes, productivity and performance indicators, inputs and value addedness, customers and service delivery.

This language, and the understanding of management and control which it reflects, transform our understanding of 'educational practice' and thus of the professional role of the teacher who engages in and is responsible for such practice. That shift in role (and thus in our understanding of professional judgement and of professional development of teachers for exercising that judgement) is best reflected in that changed vision of education and of the teacher, illustrated by Morrell's defence of the teacher and the educational community, on the one hand, and the DfEE's recent accounts of the profession of teaching, on the other. In the former, education and thus teaching is a social practice within a tradition of deliberation about values (through literature, the humanities, the arts, the practice of the sciences). To that extent, the profession of teaching was a custodian of those values, of (if you like) those moral purposes and practices. In the latter, education and thus teaching are more narrowly confined to those practices which most effectively produce the targets established outside the educational community and tradition. The control, direction and nature of professional development changes accordingly – and the role of higher education necessarily is diminished.

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FROM ACCOUNTANT TO VALUE-ADDED BUSINESS ADVISOR: TRAINING PROFESSIONALS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

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Introduction: CPD in an Elite Professional Context

We offer here a view on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), so to speak, 'from the top', reflecting on a profession, Chartered Accountancy, that is today recognisably in the 'elite' category. Through an intriguing historical development, the once-humble craft of bookkeeping has emerged as one of the leading professional careers. Whether viewed in terms of its attraction to the young graduate elite, the revenue-earning power of its top firms, the average salaries of its practitioners, the impact of accounting practice in the private and public sectors, or its tax and consultancy expertise, accountancy is today a highly significant feature of the social, economic and political landscape. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that Chartered accountancy has been the leading first job destination for UK graduates over the past decade, and that this popularity has fed back into the university sector, where the growth in the number, size and popularity of accountancy and business degree programmes continues as yet unabated.[1]

The elite positioning of accountancy means that it offers an interesting case for study, if one is looking for insights not only into how CPD currently operates, but also how it may evolve in the near to medium term. Developments at 'the top' often become models for adoption further 'down' the status pecking order (even if there are considerable problems in their translation and adoption, and even if their implementation at the top is itself problematic). But if that is in general true, what is going on in accountancy arguably has a special interest in the current educational context, where CPD and lifelong learning have become such watchwords. For this is not simply an elite profession. Over the past two decades, it is not unreasonable to

suggest that the leading accountancy firms, along with the major professional bodies, have been actively engaged in developing and promoting a 'super-elite' image. Education and training have been a crucial factor here, for it has clearly been recognised that one (if not *the*) key to super-elitism is the identification, recruitment and retention of the highest quality people. And given the perennial problems in defining and identifying 'quality' in such contexts, the best proxy has been to select those with the highest quality and highest level of university education. So we have arguably been seeing the emergence of a super-elite within accountancy differentiated in terms of educational background and qualifications, and the firms they work for, as, over the past two decades, recruits have increasingly come from the 'old universities' with a 2 (i) degree or above, with little regard for the subject studied. This group now forms the largest category of entrants into training contracts with the 'Big 5' accountancy firms.[2] Under these training contracts, the would-be super-elite work as junior staff to gain experience within the firm, while typically studying for a qualification with one of the two designated 'elite' professional institutes, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ICAEW) or the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS).[3]

From the other side of the picture, trainees will typically have some sense that they are joining a large and powerful profession (the ICAEW alone has 120,000 members), and they are certainly aware that there are a series of major incentives for taking this career route. Some are immediate. Trainees get their training, tutorial support and exam fees paid by the firm, plus a starting salary averaging around £15,000-18,000, providing they succeed in passing the requisite professional exams, and perform in line with the firm's criteria for admission to the super-elite. Other incentives are more long-term. Successful 'new qualified' accountants have the prospect of enhancing their pre-qualification salary by some £10,000 while also being on the fast track 'to the top', in terms of career remuneration, job status and influence, either within the firm they joined or in the outside world. Accountants throughout this century have been the single most represented group on the boards of leading publicly-quoted UK companies.[4] Increasingly, they turn up among the highest echelons of 'the great and the good' (*vide*, for his multiple contributions to the putative reform of the public sector, including the UK universities, Sir Ron Dearing).

Firms, Professional Bodies and Individuals: The Issue of Differing Agendas

Within this context, there are an increasing number of pressures and incentives for a range of forms of CPD, which we may consider in terms of the professional bodies, the firms and the individual. For the professional bodies, there have long been regulatory concerns to be met, not least because, in the 'reserved' fields of Audit, Investment and Insolvency, there are statutory requirements of good practice, whose oversight has, since the nineteenth century, been largely devolved to the professional bodies by the state. But in addition, for the firms, particularly the Big 5, there is a drive, along with merger and growth, towards increased specialisation, both within the traditional accounting-related fields of audit and tax, and with the diversified provision of other 'added-value' services, particularly forms of consultancy. Finally, for the individual, the goal of becoming a super-elite Chartered Accountant offers a number of career options, as already indicated, e.g. continuing as a specialist within the firm, switching firms, or leaving practice and pursuing other high-profile options.

In such a context, it is not surprising that CPD within accountancy covers a range of forms, and is undertaken for a range of motives. There are obvious old reasons. For instance, given the regulatory requirements in the 'reserved fields', relevant forms of accredited CPD have been a requirement for well over a generation now, for any individual who wishes to become further accredited by acquiring their practising certificate.[5] But now the drive for competitive advantage ratchets up the pursuit of specialist expertise for both firms and individuals. For firms, as we have seen, the initial strategy is to recruit the best available graduates, on the basis that the smarter they are, the more relatively advantaged the firm against its competitors. But then the strategy extends to 'retaining the best of the best and attracting the best of the rest'. As this increasingly means searching out and retaining specialists, firms run specific training and upgrading programmes within key specialisations. If they can also provide some externally recognised qualification through these programmes (e.g. a qualification in Tax via the Institute of Tax, or in other fields such as Investment or IT), this can present itself as a win/win situation, for individual and firm. But here a perennial paradox of increased educational provision recurs. For once a positive and career-enhancing inducement for super-elite individuals to undertake CPD is offered,

it can hardly be withdrawn. Yet the effect of one firm doing it will be for others to follow, whereupon, in strict competitive advantage terms, any first-mover advantage is likely to be rapidly competed away. But this is not likely to lead to a diminution in CPD provision. Instead, a new steady state tends to be reached, where no-one can afford not to offer such programmes.

Super-elite individuals are now arguably becoming the 'beneficiaries' of this paradox in their relations with their professional body. For professional institutes now have competition-induced reasons for expanding their CPD portfolios. Traditionally, they (and their members) may have seen provision of the professional entry card – the ACA, in the ICAEW's case – as the terminal level of professional qualification. But for some years now there has been a stream of individuals entering leading MBA programmes as self-funded students, with a first degree, plus an ACA or equivalent, and Big Firm experience. This has upped the ante for the culminating qualification on the CV of the would-be top managers of tomorrow. One response has been for accountancy firms to sponsor potential high flyers on MBAs, or to develop firm-specific initiatives like the Arthur Andersen company-branded MBA, which increases the chances of retaining high flyers in-house. In this context, the professional bodies have responded with their own post-qualification qualifications, such as Advanced Diplomas (the ICAEW launched such a scheme in Tax, Corporate Finance and IT in 1999), as well as through non-credentialled opportunities. The issue here concerns what members value, however. On the non-credentialled side, the ICAEW has recently developed Faculties offering briefings on hot topics, and knowledge updates, beginning with Audit and now covering five fields. Yet while this initiative has clearly struck a chord, with some 30,000 subscriptions additional to the standard membership fee being paid to the Institute for membership of Faculties in the last financial year, the attempt to offer supplementary qualifications has yet to get off the ground.[6]

Agendas and Explanations

How then are we to explain the current increase in interest in CPD provision in accounting? One explanation is in terms of the competition between firms, and indeed

between professional bodies, where there is a 'bidding up' of learning offerings in a market where elite talent is always a scarce resource. A second could be to extrapolate from Abbott's (1988) theory of professionalisation as a battle for jurisdiction. Here accountancy as a profession has a clear jurisdiction over certain core competencies (audit, insolvency), a less clear jurisdiction over others (tax, also a field for the law and independent tax specialists), and a prospecting approach to others that are seen as worth contesting (consultancy and IT services). Expanding CPD provision is a way of securing and extending jurisdiction. Another explanation might go to a still more macro-level, and view this as one specific, elite-end manifestation of the more general proliferation of interest in learning beyond 'terminal' degrees or qualifications, which could be read as a sign of the growth of the knowledge or learning society. A fourth alternative would be to read this as an elite manifestation of the continuing power of the 'Diploma Disease' identified by Ronald Dore (1976), or of the working out of new power relations within a society where the 'knowledge class' has become so significant (Gouldner, 1979).

We would not want to rule out any of these possibilities at this stage, nor the possibility that they all, as a group, reflect some deeper or more general transformation in the way we are constituted as knowing and knowledgeable subjects in the contemporary world.[7] But while attempting to reflect on all this, we have been fortunately able to undertake a range of empirical research projects over the past few years within the accountancy profession.[8] Regardless of the wider explanation to be adopted, this research indicates that there are certain distinctive (though not necessarily unique) features to the recent development of CPD within the accounting profession.

Perhaps the first point to be made concerns the flux that firms, professional bodies and individuals have all experienced over recent years. A generation ago there were a number of leading firms, but none with the transnational scope, size and revenue streams that characterise them today. This has meant that the range of work undertaken, the influence exerted and the career experience of accountants have been transformed virtually out of recognition. There is far more specialisation from a far earlier stage in the accountancy career. Indeed even within the initial training stage,

Big 5 trainees are unlikely to get much exposure to the old 'bookkeeping basics', or be required to go through the 'accounts preparation' rite of passage. In this the neophyte would typically have been thrown a box of invoices and receipts and told to work through them to prepare a trial balance, an experience that is still not untypical for trainees in small accountancy firms. But today Big 5 trainees can expect to be working within a specialist, rather than a 'general practice' environment (except insofar as 'general practice' becomes a possible route for specialisation within the firm). They will typically be working in a range of client-facing environments from day one, and learning to act 'in the name of the client' (Anderson-Gough, Grey & Robson, forthcoming). This orientation ties in with the concept of 'adding value', and thereby earning larger fees than would be the case if the firms stuck to traditional accountancy skills.

But, as already indicated, this has also led, beyond the initial training stage, to significant consequences, which bring CPD more centre-stage for individuals, firms and professional bodies. The concentration of economic power within the Big 5, as an accountancy oligopoly, the continued need for a growth strategy to maintain the advantages that oligopoly brings, the opportunities afforded to super-elite members via the specialisation that ensues, all combine to construct a new (post-accountancy?) identity for the accounting professional. In the accountancy super-firm, designated high flyers are shaped and encouraged to take on the identity of the firm as quickly as possible and to market the wider services of the firm in every context. Within the professional institutes, the dilemma of maintaining an accountancy identity while meeting the demands for increasing and rapidly changing kinds of specialisation has become acute. Accountancy expertise may remain necessary, but is manifestly no longer sufficient. Hence, perhaps, the re-definition by the ICAEW of the accountant as the 'Added Value Business Advisor' (ICAEW, 1998).

Consequently, while the growth of CPD within accountancy to date could still be interpreted either as a form of add-on to training for initial qualifications or a series of ad hoc responses to multiple demands for specialisation, it seems to us that CPD now has a more 'strategic' role. What is underway is a reshaping of accountancy as an elite profession. One manifestation of this is the long-running concern among the big

firms over the adequacy of training, which has erupted in the last year into a full-blown crisis. The crisis is as so often not easy to untangle. Concerns over the cost of training seem to be overlaid with concerns over the adequacy of the preparation offered for the fast-changing business world of today.[9] But in any event, this year Ernst & Young have enrolled none of their accountancy trainees in the ICAEW, opting to put them through the ICAS qualification instead. With other Big 5 firms considering following suit, the ICAEW have already restructured their training programme, cutting down the time spent out of the office on study and proposing a new examination structure, designed to promote a more integrative and critically aware learning from day one of the professional career. (Interestingly, the ICAEW is not alone in such restructuring. On the contrary, all the professional accountancy institutes are in various stages of redeveloping their curricula and examinations, along lines that are designed to produce a more critically aware and well-rounded practitioner.) But inevitably, in this context the perceived 'need' for CPD rises, since such redefined practitioners will by their redefinition require more life-long learning.

Such developments, we suggest, signal the strategic level of interest that CPD now has for of all the parties involved. Firms, professional bodies and individuals have all moved towards embracing CPD, whether for more or less positive reasons, and whether on a more or less voluntary basis. As the current crisis confirms, the needs for specialisation can no longer be met within the confines of the old initial qualification. The idea that such a qualification might constitute a boundary or terminal stage in professional development is now definitively breached. Consequently, the individual is today faced with constantly updating the skill set and the self-definition of the elite accountant. The firm faces a continuous search for the addition of people and skill sets that will putatively enhance the value-adding process. The elite professional bodies are pitched into a new kind of fight for the credibility of their brand, and possibly even their survival.

But in addition, this strategic kind of change is conspiring to change the educational climate within this elite professional world. Firms, institutes and individuals are faced with moving from a past which has been pedagogically quite conservative (with a stress on standards and rigour) towards a future with more

flexible and critically aware approaches to learning. The idea of learning to learn becomes something to be positively embraced, at least in principle. CPD therefore becomes a *sine qua non* for the maintenance and extension of what we might call the 'elite accountancy project'.

Conclusion: Obstacles, Opportunities and Further Reflections

But if there are therefore new opportunities for CPD, or better ways in which it cannot avoid being increasingly foregrounded within the accountancy field, we can also see a range of obstacles to the outcome that is now strategically desired. At this point, where the situation is so much in flux, and the strategic wood is not necessarily all that visible for all the tactical trees, it may be easiest to list these issues as a number of questions for consideration. At the moment we see the following issues as of particular significance, but this list is not exhaustive, nor necessarily a collection of the most important issues over the longer term.

- Will the new initiatives promote real changes in the training and knowledge acquired by professionals, or will there just be relabelling of 'old regime' approaches?
- How far will there be real changes which are then be undermined or compromised by continuing pedagogic traditions (e.g. tutorial cramming, separation from on-the-job training)?
- What is the scope for new approaches to learning?
- What possibilities are there for redefining or eliding boundaries between training providers (e.g. tutorial organizations, accountancy firms, universities)?

These questions are very much open, as is the precise shape that CPD will take within this elite field. The possible interactions are highly complex and labile, given the paradoxes thrown up, and the conflicting agendas involved.

But there is arguably one more general observation that we can offer in conclusion. It is an observation inspired by one particular issue that emerged during

the SKOPE day, in the process of comparing the CPD experience across different fields. On the one hand, it became apparent that there were many similarities in current developments. The accountancy field in that respect may be at the elite end of the spectrum, but it is not therefore dissociated from developments in other areas. All fields are confronting such issues as growth in specialisation and flexibility, and the move towards more critically aware and reflexive requirements in educational provision. In that respect, we would not want to contribute to any continuing mystification of 'elite difference'. On the other hand, the issue that arose was how far a new managerialism was in general infiltrating or compromising the reshaping of professions in the name of CPD. Is it therefore the case that a necessary concomitant of new CPD initiatives is a more managerialist control over a professional field?[10] It is here, we suggest, that a reflection on the particular case of accountancy may be of some value. Accountancy, after all, is a profession frequently connected in the popular view with 'management', and with good reason. This is not just a rhetorical or empty connection, since accountancy firms today are deeply involved in providing consultancy advice to 'add value to' and restructure private-sector firms, and in promoting management solutions to and for government – just as governments increasingly see virtue in bidding to break the power of the supposedly dead hand of traditional bureaucracy.

It is tempting in this context to see an essential opposition between professionalisation and management, particularly when it is 'management by accounting' (McSweeney, 1991) which is the means deployed, in many of the professional fields considered, to challenge traditional professional rights and prerogatives.[11] But while this is without doubt an important dimension of how CPD can be compromised or turned to serve anti-professional or deprofessionalising ends, we would suggest that management is not necessarily or simply opposable to professionalisation. In one respect, we should perhaps be considering whether it is *particular kinds* of management that serve to curtail the autonomous activity of professionals. In another, we should perhaps reflect further on the ways in which professionalisation may not be so easily separable from managerialism.

Here the case of accounting may offer a special case that embodies a more general truth. Certainly, if we return to the kind of 'disciplinary' analysis referred to above (see note 7 above), one may observe that management and accounting, as forms of expert knowledge applied to modern business enterprise, have a joint history going back into the nineteenth century (e.g. Chandler, 1977). Indeed, on this analysis, one argument is that it was the introduction of forms of accounting for human performance that marked off management from earlier forms of coordinating human activity, and which led to the subsequent 'triumph' of the managerialist forms of 'modern business enterprise, a triumph that now seemingly extends into the heart of the public and professional worlds (Hoskin & Macve, 1994). Under this analysis, we have, over the twentieth century, a complex interplay to unravel or trace, where the emergence of management is integrally connected to the development of modern forms of accounting knowledge, and is not easily dissociable from the rise of accountancy to being a high-status profession. Indeed, the recent transformation of accountancy partnerships into managerially run corporate-style bodies maybe read as taking this complex interplay a stage further.[12]

In any event, analyses such as this suggest that the interrelations between management, accountancy and professionalisation are far from straightforward. Therefore positing a simple opposition between professionalisation and management may be premature and misrepresent the complexity of the ongoing interplays. But at the same time, and not wanting to lose any of these complexities, this is a central and pressing issue to be thought through.

Notes

1 In the year 1998/9 total student entries to the training programme of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales were 4,448, of which 92% were graduates. Of these graduates, approximately 45% had business degrees (including in Accounting) and 26% had degrees in Engineering, Maths or Science, with the Social Sciences and Arts subjects making up the rest. These numbers have been fairly stable over the 1990s (ICAEW, 2000).

2 The Big 5 are the product of the most recent round of mergers – mergers which can be read as one aspect of maintaining the profession's competitive advantage, both in status and financial reward terms. From what was a set of 'Big 8' firms a decade ago., the Big 5 are currently made up of Arthur Andersen, Deloitte & Touche, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). Of these PwC is the largest in terms of fee income and number of employees, with Deloitte & Touche the smallest. Andersen's is second with the inclusion of Andersen Consulting, as Andersen Worldwide, but (a signal of the tensions at the top), AA and AC are in the process of demerger.

This is not least because of problems associated with a competitive success culture, as the greater fee earning potential of AC as the Consulting arm led to a feeling among AC partners that they were subsidising AA ones in the division of partnership rewards. Conversely these tensions had led AA to develop its own potentially overlapping consultancy division in order to 'add more value' within the accountancy side of the business.

[3] We should note, however, that trainees in the elite firms do not only train for ICAEW and ICAS qualifications. With the increasing diversification of the firms in terms of the business they undertake, and in particular the commitment to using their accountancy expertise as a springboard to consultancy, trainees are increasingly hired in to work and gain qualifications in more specialist areas. There has long been a tradition of hiring in trainees to qualify with one of the other UK accountancy institutes, sc. CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants), ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) or CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy). This continues, and in addition trainees may be sponsored through such other relevant fields as Tax, via the ATII system.

[4] Traditionally, in the UK, more Board Members have come from accountancy than any other profession, a distinctive feature not found in other leading economies. In Germany and France they have tended to come from engineering backgrounds, in the US from law or general business backgrounds (Locke, 1984).

[5] Currently, regulated CPD consists of a system of achieving points through structured and unstructured study.

[6] The differing levels of uptake may however well reflect the priorities to which accountants currently respond. Hardly any members have registered for the diplomas as yet, and so this initiative may have to be written off to experience. What we may more generally infer is that if this initiative fails, some other formal type of CPD will emerge to take its place, alongside the more informal provision of the Faculties.

[7] The application and re-working of Foucault's ideas on 'disciplinarity' is one way of addressing this possibility. The work of Hoskin & Macve has taken up Foucault's observation (Foucault, 1975) about the significance of examination as a practice that disciplines individuals while engineering the production of disciplinary knowledge, to consider the joint production in modernity of individuals as disciplinary experts and organizations as loci for disciplinary (and increasingly managerial) activity. Under this approach (e.g. Hoskin & Macve, 1994) the world has become a 'knowledge society' since around 1800, through the successful dissemination from within higher education of such practices as making individuals write while subjecting them to constant examination and grading them numerically on their performance. The successful dissemination and internalisation of these practices simultaneously engenders the diploma disease, the constitution of a knowledge class as elite, the growth of professionalisation and so of multiple professions engaged in boundary disputes, and finally of a managerial form of capitalism where competition is endemic.

[8] What follows is therefore largely based on our analysis of CPD provision within the Institute and as it affects Big 5 firm members, as elicited through previous and ongoing research. This research includes Hoskin and Steele (1988), Hoskin and Geddes (1997), Grey, Robson and Anderson-Gough (1998). Hoskin and Jones are currently undertaking ICAEW-sponsored research into Best Practice in Professional and Academic Accounting Education and Training.

[9] The elite position of the ICAEW is consequently under serious threat, in particular from ICAS, because of the disquiet over their current ICAEW training provision. The disquiet over cost has two major dimensions, (a) concerning the length of 'chargeable time' out of the office required for tutorial preparation and exam study (19 weeks for part one alone), and (b) concerning the percentage of 'good' candidates failing to pass all their exams first time, thus increasing the 'waste' of time for valuable employees. To this has been added a growing unhappiness with the over-technical nature of the accounting content studied, and the requirement that all examinees sit the same set of examinations (proposals for a core and options model have repeatedly been voted down by the membership, which has not wanted the general competence of 'the accountant' to be diluted by over-specialisation).

[10] This possibility was captured nicely in the image conjured up in a comment by Ewart Keep, who spoke of professions as so many sandcastles at the seaside, with the question now being which would prove most able to withstand the inrushing tide of managerial control.

[11] As the SKOPE seminar showed, fields such as medicine and education have been particularly targeted for 'management by accounting' initiatives (cf McSweeney, 1991). Both fields have been 'managerialised' through the imposition on qualified professionals of performance targets and measures of cost and efficiency, plus the need to acquire, via training, multiple competencies that have been identified as the necessary means for 'being a professional' (on a 'whole as the sum of parts' model). In such developments, management can be seen as opposed to professionalism, as it is used as a deliberate means of countering the 'autonomy' claimed by the old-style professional (teacher or consultant), who could claim sovereignty over their domain, by dint of the expertise expressed in the professional qualification.

[12] If one goes into the historical detail, one may trace how, across the last part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, accounting, as expert knowledge deployed within business, was integral to cost-driven management's emergence as an alternative to earlier forms of bureaucracy. Meanwhile, from the 1880s, the development of the professional accountancy institutes offering chartered qualifications establishes the field in the UK as a 'professional' one. Similar professionalisation moves take place across Europe and in the USA. Finally, the emergent success of managerial capitalism, dominated by oligopolistic large corporations, ensures the establishment of high-status roles for accountants, e.g. as financial directors, auditors and consultants, at the same time as they are solidifying their position as professionals (cf Hoskin & Macve, 1994).

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TOWARDS LIFELONG LEARNING IN HEALTHCARE

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How can the long-term survival of an institution, operating in a context of relentless turbulence and flux, be assured?

This is a question we might ask ourselves of the National Health Service (NHS) in general and of the Bristol Royal Infirmary in particular within the last couple of years. Indeed, there can be few organisations within the developed world that are not operating in pretty choppy seas. It is becoming clear, however, that a culture of lifelong learning is a prerequisite to surviving, let alone thriving, in the global marketplace. Leaders who are able to tap the latent learning potential and creative capacity of their workforce will discover the way towards optimal organisational performance.

I intend to link this paper to a recent situation which has provoked reassessments of many aspects of healthcare, including continuing professional development. As you will be aware, following the deaths of an unexpectedly large number of children and babies at Bristol Royal Infirmary, an Inquiry was set up in 1998, chaired by Professor Ian Kennedy of University College, London, to investigate what had gone wrong. Phase One began in March 1999 and examined the delivery of complex paediatric cardiac surgical services at the Bristol Royal Infirmary and Children's Hospital from 1984-1995. Phase Two (January- March 2000) consisted of a systematic attempt to help all healthcare professionals learn, in the broadest sense, from these tragic circumstances. It focused on issues such as:

- Professional and managerial culture and their impact on the quality of service
- Leadership, vision, change and learning from experience
- Service: empowering the public in the healthcare process
- Systems, safety and risk management

- People, education, training, development and governance

People, Education, Training, Development and Governance

In this paper I shall focus on the last of those issues. Professional associations, Royal Colleges and others were asked to submit position papers to the Phase Two Inquiry and these later formed the basis for a series of seminars that sought to influence the movers and shakers within UK healthcare. The Inquiry Panel's Interim Report is available along with full details of the proceedings at www.bristol-inquiry.org.uk and the full report is due for publication late in 2000. It is good to know that something that is developmental came out of the Bristol experience. Let us hope that, equally, healthcare practice will be improved following on from the Harold Shipman investigations. Doctors, and consultants in particular, were the focus of this Inquiry but much came out of it, especially in relation to continuing professional development, that can be applied to all healthcare professionals.

Consider the following from Professor George Alberti, President of the Royal College of Physicians, to Stage One of the Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry:

> I would hope that we can ensure that all consultants in the country, in all specialities, continued to maintain and improve their standards, their practice and their knowledge, throughout their working career, which, in most professions was a tacit assumption, but without any obligation, in the past.

So continuing professional development (CPD) assumes centre stage. It is already central within nursing, midwifery and health visiting, and in the professions allied to medicine; now the medics are joining in.

The concept of lifelong learning is pivotal to developing both learning organisations and a culture which enables effective healthcare. Education, training and continuing professional development are crucial elements of lifelong learning, and whilst it is helpful to differentiate between them, it is also important to set them within a lifelong learning framework.

Lifelong learning describes a journey throughout a persons' life, during which learning occurs and knowledge, skills and attitudes are gained, as a result of both formal and informal educational opportunities and experience. Lifelong learning for

practitioners is set within the context of their patient/client relationships, their workplace, employer, profession and society. Learning is therefore affected by these contextual factors, and can also influence them: the benefits are two-way.

Whilst learning takes place during episodes of formal education, there is also a continuum of informal learning which occurs on the job. Professional learning should be based on common principles and focus on transferable and clinical skills, so that it is relevant and easily accessed, and set within a supportive culture which recognises practitioners' needs. Lifelong learning, to the individual, should be seamless.

Learning for healthcare professionals involves developing and using different ways of knowing in practice. It has both theoretical and practical components, which the practitioner reflexively uses within specific contexts. Academic learning has traditionally been based on the disciplines that underpin practice and is usually gained within an institution of higher education, resulting in an award. A sound grasp of these disciplines is essential, since they provide the foundation for developing skills in application, interpretation, communication, decision-making and judgement that are key to professional practice. Academic awards should be fit for purpose and the professional component of award-bearing courses should enable the practitioner to be fit for practice.

Principles on which Lifelong Learning should be Based

At the Royal College of Nursing, we believe that wherever possible learning should be:

- person/individual or team-centred;
- accessible and user-friendly;
- flexible and capable of fitting within practitioners' often demanding lifestyles;
- practice- and work-based, using experience, encouraging reflection and addressing practice-focused problems;
- set within a culture which actively supports it, both within higher education institutions and the individual's workplace;

- of demonstrable benefit to individual healthcare professionals, employers, patients/clients, the profession and society;
- accompanied by clear learning and practice outcomes that are deliverable;
- facilitated by experts who are able to provide critical companionship and demonstrate their own learning;
- facilitating transferable skills as essential tools for lifelong learning;
- focused on knowledge that is evidence-based, up-to-date and of the highest possible quality, and
- focused on collaboratively identifying the learning needs of healthcare professionals, in conjunction with other stakeholders, for example service-users, managers etc.

Values on which the Principles are Based

The principles underlying lifelong learning for healthcare professionals are themselves underpinned by certain values which we have expressed as:

- mutual respect between practitioners, their facilitators and those who support their learning in the workplace;
- sharing knowledge freely;
- developing all practitioners so that they reach their fullest potential;
- high challenge accompanied by high support;
- a focus on developing personal knowing;
- valuing expert practice, and
- a commitment to developing a learning culture.

Crucially, healthcare professionals need support and challenge within trusting relationships to work in this way. Inter-disciplinary learning plays an increasing role and the development of such learning, wherever it takes place, should be encouraged and nurtured for learning together with other healthcare professionals can promote

effective team-work and help create a shared vision. Three of the five dimensions necessary to develop a learning organisation which can continually realise its aspirations (Senge, 1990), include:

> *personal mastery:* the ability continually to deepen and clarify one's own personal vision and learning, an active process, and commitment to lifelong learning, a skill which is actively developed through mechanisms such as supervision and action learning;
>
> *building shared vision:* working with individual visions to develop a common set of principles and values which enable people to be cohesive and strive towards a common goal;
>
> *team learning:* emphasising teams rather than individuals, as teams are the key units in organisations; facilitating team processes and team working (which may have been missing in the tragic situation at the Bristol Royal Infirmary).

Continuing Professional Development

Lifelong learning and continuing professional development are the processes through which healthcare professionals develop and improve the quality of care for their patients and clients in an ever-changing healthcare environment. Delivering a quality service depends on healthcare professionals having the right competences: the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective practice as well as those necessary to respond to and anticipate a changing health care context. CPD is a way of achieving, maintaining and upgrading those competences. It is however the responsibility of each accountable professional to identify and undertake the CPD that he or she needs, and the need is unique to each individual professional.

CPD describes learning activities that are undertaken throughout a person's working life, which are designed to enhance individual and organisational performance in the professional arena. This is a narrower perspective than that of lifelong learning, of which CPD forms a part. Essentially CPD can be seen as bestowing benefits on the individual, his or her employer, the profession and society,

and in healthcare we take 'society' to include 'patients and clients'. The purpose of continuing professional development is to enable practitioners and healthcare professionals to:

- maintain and improve standards of patient and client care;
- develop both professionally and personally, achieving their fullest potential;
- maintain and improve standards of professional knowledge and competence, and
- develop their maturity and confidence, so that they are willing to accept responsibility, able to think analytically and flexibly, able to recognise a need for further preparation and willing to engage in self-development.

The Benefits of Continuing Professional Development

The benefits of CPD accrue not only to those who undertake it; they also extend throughout the healthcare environment, to employers and to the consumers of care. Distinguishing between these groups, we can summarise these benefits as below.

For the healthcare professional, CPD:

- improves professional practice and care of patients and clients;
- develops professional and personal knowledge, skills, experience and understanding;
- helps the professional to gain and maintain confidence and competence;
- enables mutual understanding of other roles within the healthcare team, and
- enables the practitioner to work effectively, both as an individual and as a team member.

For the employer, CPD:

- improves the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness in the care of patients/clients;
- develops potential and job satisfaction in staff;

- helps recruitment and retention, and
- can contribute to the creation of a learning culture.

For patients and clients CPD helps to ensure that

- they receive quality (effective, consistent and personalised) care;
- the practice of their healthcare professionals is up-to-date;
- healthcare professionals are competent and confident in delivering care, and
- healthcare professionals understand their needs and problems.

Principles on which CPD should be Based

From the above, a number of principles can be identified which are central to the enhancement of continuing professional development. It should be flexible and responsive to professional needs, practice-focused and evidence-based. It should also take account of learning needs and inevitably, has resource implications which should be recognised. There are various aspects to each of these.

CPD should be flexible and responsive to professional needs, specifically to the needs of the practitioner, those of the healthcare organisation, and of the professional regulatory system. Equally, it has to respond to developments within the area of practice, as well as to patients and users and the changing healthcare context.

CPD should be practice-focused, that is practice-led and outcomes-based, drawing on healthcare professionals' experience. It should facilitate reflection in and on action, and should address practice-focused problems. It should focus on knowledge which is evidence-based, up-to-date and of the highest quality.

Practitioners' learning needs should be at the forefront, with CPD using and valuing practitioners' experience. Systems which identify learning needs, such as individual Performance and Development Review, should be in place, alongside other support systems such as clinical/professional supervision, preceptorship and mentorship. In addition, CPD should facilitate transferable skills as essential tools for lifelong learning.

CPD has resource implications which should be recognised, and healthcare professionals should have equity of access to funding and skilled facilitation. They need allocated time off to pursue learning opportunities, and professional library and information services, journals and information technology (IT) support. They should have guidance for the development of their professional portfolio or personal development plan, and advice on the management and development of their careers.

Clearly, if any of the foregoing is missing, if for instance access to library facilities or information technology is poor, then this will act as a constraint on the continuing learning of professionals.

How can CPD enable Professionals to Develop their Knowledge, Skills and Abilities throughout their Careers?

Academic development is likely to focus on formal opportunities for learning, usually with an award as their end-point, that is some form of qualification. For nurses, this could be, for instance, a post-registration Diploma in Professional Studies in Nursing or one of a number of clinically-based courses offered by the current four National Boards for Nursing Midwifery and Health Visiting.

Professional development is different. It is not about going on courses; it is often informal, unstructured, shared and may well take place in the workplace. The work of professionals provides a rich source of learning opportunities based on practice, and often these are at no or minimal cost. Frequently learning opportunities present 'on the hoof' and there is no way in which a teacher could prepare for them. One example of such 'crisis teaching' might be if a teacher were working with a student nurse to give a patient his medication and he suddenly had an epileptic seizure: an unexpected chance to teach and reflect-in-action.

There are key differences between workplace learning and more formal educational initiatives. In the workplace (and this may be as diverse as working in the community or in an operating theatre), these features can be characterised as follows:

- The practitioner is in control.
- There is no formal curriculum and so learning can be needs-based.

- Outcomes are less predictable.
- Learning is often tacit or implicit and the practitioner may need help in its articulation.
- Emphasis is on the practitioners' experiences.
- Learning can be a collaborative, collegial activity.
- Learning is highly contextualised, with affective, social and cognitive dimensions.
- Learning is often seen as seamless know-how.
- There is less distinction between knowledge and skills.

It is vital that this learning is mapped with the practitioner, in order to explore decision-making, clinical judgements and the development of what Hager and Beckett call 'practical wisdom'. Clearly it is backed up by more formal theoretical learning, but professionals' practice is situational, focusing on the particular, dealing with affective and social domains; it is outcome-oriented, practical and it is intelligent (Hager and Beckett, 1998). All the more important, therefore, to focus on the workplace, helping professionals to develop their practice, improve their care and apply their learning.

Initiatives such as work shadowing, visits to centres of excellence, taking part in a learning set, keeping a reflective journal, being mentored, undertaking clinical/professional supervision and so on, offer a wealth of development and learning. Private study, literature reviewing and journal reading are additional opportunities. If strategies are not in place to support such initiatives, then learning will be impoverished.

It is important that whatever is undertaken fits the individual's identified learning needs. In the National Health Service, if clinical governance is to work, then it has to be underpinned with CPD which is relevant, both to local service development needs and to the needs of each professional working within that area. If CPD is to meet needs in this way then it has to be planned at both organisational level and individual level. Portfolios and Personal Development Plans are key tools to help

the individual to capture and manage CPD. They should have both retrospective (learning journey undertaken to date) and prospective (journey to be travelled/action planning) elements, including evidence of learning and be linked to the individual's career pathway. Capturing and documenting learning in this way is an important skill which needs to be developed.

Supporting CPD

If CPD is to be effective and value for money, then it needs to be set within a supportive culture, a culture which sees learning as an investment and is prepared to support that investment financially and organisationally.

Organisational support for CPD might include providing opportunities and guidance for identifying developmental needs, appraisal processes that focus on development, schemes for mentoring staff, offering trained supervision (both educational and clinical) which challenges and supports the individual and his or her practice. All of this should be set within a culture which values learning and emphasises its importance for the accountable professional. Again, if this facet is missing, then learning is less likely to flourish.

The ability to access knowledge is crucial if CPD is to bring about the benefits described earlier. This refers not only to having IT systems available for staff, but also to having the skills to use such systems. Developing such skills, for many healthcare professionals, requires support. More and more knowledge is widely available, not just to professionals but also to their patients and clients, but people need help in becoming discriminating with regard to knowledge and its source. Undoubtedly IT will play a greater part in the education and practice of future health professionals.

If all of the foregoing were to become commonplace within the NHS then CPD would not need to be mandatory. It would be part of the culture and seen by all to be of such benefit that all staff, including those not regarded as healthcare professionals, would be clamouring for it.

Governance

Clinical governance is a framework 'which helps all clinicians, including nurses, to continuously improve quality and safeguard standards of care' (RCN, 1998). It has three main elements: quality improvement programmes, risk management programmes, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

Professional governance, or professional self-regulation, makes clinicians accountable for the quality of their own clinical practice. Clinicians exercise their professional accountability through using their knowledge, skills and judgement to apply professional standards in practice (UKCC, 1999). It also makes them responsible for their own professional conduct. For nurses, midwives and health visitors this includes a requirement to maintain professional knowledge and competence, and to decline any duties or responsibilities unless able to perform them in a safe and skilled manner (UKCC, 1992).

Professional governance, therefore, underpins the principles of clinical governance, as it means clinicians need to deliver high quality care through being up-to-date and competent, using best practice and practising safely.

All professions and all levels of staff should be involved in clinical governance. For clinicians to participate they need the appropriate knowledge and skills, there must be relevant structures in place, and an open, learning culture. Both qualified staff and students need to know what it means to them as individuals and how to be involved. Some of the barriers to this may be that current levels of understanding amongst clinicians are patchy and there may be resistance to change, resulting from fear of the unknown.

Suggestions for Action Points

Against our theme of 'CPD: Looking Ahead', certain action points are evident in the context of healthcare professions:

- Learning should be flexible, capable of fitting within the practitioner's lifestyle, using a variety of media.

- Learning should be practice- and work-based using experience, encouraging reflection and addressing practice-focused problems.
- Learning should be set within a culture which supports and values it; this takes time and skills to develop.
- Learning should be facilitated by experts who are trained for the job.
- Clinical/professional supervision should be encouraged, in order to develop a common vision for transforming health care.
- Nurse teachers should be able to spend sufficient time in practice to keep their skills up-to-date and to support learning for nurse learners.
- The divisions between the professional groups should be reduced and there should be emphasis on our common purpose.
- We need to promote a positive attitude to lifelong learning and create a learning culture.
- Healthcare professionals should have equity of access to resources for CPD.

Conclusion

Education and development in the NHS are linked strategies to maintain and improve standards, practice and knowledge throughout the working careers of healthcare professionals. As Professor George Alberti observes in his oral evidence to Phase One of the Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry: 'this was a tacit assumption, without any obligation in the past'. Obligation, though, does not have to be imposed; professionals are accountable for their actions, and as such, have personal and professional obligations to 'act always in such a manner as to promote and safeguard the interests and well-being of patients and clients'. Clearly, as part of this, they must 'maintain and improve' their 'professional knowledge and competence' (UKCC, 1992).

Alongside this professional obligation must be set the obligation of the employer to support learning and development with resources, both human and

financial, and the development of a culture which explicitly values and nurtures professional learning.

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CPD IN ENGINEERING: NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

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Throughout history engineers have needed to develop their abilities to meet the challenges of work. Development activities have taken many forms but, in engineering, there has been a strong emphasis on building on the achievements and failures of earlier work. There is a tradition of sharing experience through learned societies and linking with the research activities of universities. Education and training are key elements in the formation of engineers, requiring active partnerships between academic and industrial bodies.

Continuing this development throughout their working lives has become a key issue for engineers. The need for continuous learning is recognised as vital in order to keep pace with changes in technology, to meet business needs, and to enhance personal employability. The approaches taken followed the traditional education and training models; these focused on structured activities which individuals were expected to record, often measured by time spent, to meet specific academic or professional requirements. This approach tended to place importance on formal activities, such as courses. Other less structured activities such as reading, workshops and projects have been encouraged, but difficulties in recording and assessment have, in practice, limited their inclusion in engineers' plans and records of their development.

The past focus has changed to a recognition that the only valid measure of development should be the results and outputs, with a view towards using the learning and taking further development action. Learning activities are part of an ongoing cycle of development. Engineers increasingly need to provide evidence of their competence to clients and employers who, in turn, need to market the expertise and capabilities of their employees. Professional development is being repositioned, away

from activities and inputs, towards its contribution to professional competence and business performance.

Professional Competence

The driving force for continuing professional development (CPD) has moved from recording inputs and activities, towards providing evidence of enhanced professional competence. A priority is to define the competences required of engineers. As a profession engineering is the guardian of a valuable body of knowledge and expertise, has defined standards, and is responsible for maintaining standards for the benefit of the public. Professional bodies provide a central source of professional competence.

In the United Kingdom, the Engineering Council, as the lead body for the profession, in partnership with 35 professional engineering institutions, defines the roles and responsibilities of professional engineers. Chartered engineers, for example, undertake and lead varied work that is essentially intellectual in nature, requiring discretion and judgement. It is concerned with cost-effective, timely, reliable, safe and environmentally sustainable outcomes. Key roles are to supervise the work of others and to assume responsibility for the direction of important tasks, including the profitable management of industrial and commercial enterprises.

The key competences required to fulfil these roles are summarised as:

- Utilise a combination of general and specialist engineering knowledge and understanding. Optimise the application of existing and emerging technology. Maintain a sound theoretical approach in enabling the introduction of new and advancing technology.
- Apply appropriate theoretical and practical methods to the analysis and solution of engineering problems. Identify the complexities of the problem.
- Provide technical and managerial leadership.
- Utilise effective communication and interpersonal skills.

- Make a personal commitment to live by the appropriate code of professional conduct, recognising obligations to society, the profession and the environment.

These competences reflect the needs of industry for engineers to have a wide range of abilities. Technical and commercial knowledge and expertise are essential, but they must be complemented by communication and management skills together with relevant personal and professional values. Industry looks to engineers to be creative, to be innovative and to provide leadership.

Many companies are developing and using competences as part of their business strategy. Nokia Mobile Phones has developed eight core competencies at corporate level. Each is divided into distinct skill sets which are then sub-divided into individual skills. There is a distinction between professional and technical competences, process-based competences, and value-based competences. Value-based competences are often used in selection and include:

- respect for individuals and the importance of customer satisfaction;
- the will to achieve and recognise achievement in others, and
- recognition of the importance of continuous learning.

Knowledge is central to business success. The knowledge-driven economy is today's buzz-word, but what does it really mean? Technology-based companies recognise that their core capabilities must include technical knowledge and expertise, complemented by managerial skills. Engineers are the holders, indeed the champions, of these capabilities. However, knowledge does not just happen. It needs to be developed and nurtured. Above all it needs to be managed. Knowledge management means learning management. It requires a culture of continuous improvement throughout the organisation.

Successful enterprises are learning organisations. And learning organisations require employees committed to achieving high standards through continuous learning. It is for these reasons that the professional engineering institutions place an emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the professional competence of their members. Professional institutions were founded as guardians and champions of

specialist knowledge for the good of society. A key activity has always been for their members to share and to build on this knowledge and expertise. Today these institutions provide a range of products and services to support their members, and for the benefit of their employers. The need for lifelong learning through continuing professional development is now providing a focus and central strategy for professional institutions.

In short we have moved from the machine age to the information age and thence to the knowledge age. New ways of operating are essential. These can be summarised as:

The mantra for the Machine Age was-

'Obey the rules. Don't screw up or else!'

Whereas the mantra for the Knowledge Age is-

'Innovate. Seize opportunity. Change the rules.
Learn faster than your competitors'

Individual Engagement in CPD

A central issue for professional development is the need for individual engineers to own and mange their development. Any systems for measuring and monitoring CPD must enhance this self ownership and commitment. Investment in CPD must be purposeful, conscious and planned if benefits are to follow. It is a business activity, focusing on maximum use of talents, aspirations and market opportunities. A necessary competence of professionals is to be conscious of their capabilities.

In order effectively to manage their professional development, engineers need access to advice and guidance. Links to company appraisal systems are important, together with information on sources of learning. There is strong interest in mentoring, which can provide opportunities to monitor and assess learning, and challenges to be innovative in seeking new paths for development. The focus for support in CPD is moving towards locally accessed services, within companies, professional institutions and other relevant bodies. Universities can facilitate this

process through establishing professional development centres, acting as catalysts for professional learning.

The most recent Survey of Registrants (Engineering Council, 1999) provides evidence of success in promoting CPD. Over the past year 50% of registrants have undertaken more than five days of training sponsored by their employers. Over 13% of Incorporated Engineers and over 20% of Engineering Technicians have undertaken part of an NVQ. Over 18% of Chartered Engineers have gained a relevant Masters degree since their initial education. And over 60% of registrants have a record of their development. For the younger engineers this figure rises to 77%. The disappointing news is that planning of CPD is not well established with only 30% having plans, or 44% for those under 34 years old.

Some European Developments

The need for high standards of professional competence is highlighted by the European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEANI). This is driven in part by requirements for mutual recognition of qualifications. Guidance to member organisations has been based largely on the lead taken by the UK in establishing a CPD Code. There is a particular focus on encouraging engineers to establish competence development plans, with records demonstrating learning achievements.

Much of the ongoing development of engineers is based on their work experience. The Professionalisation of Graduate Engineers (PROGRES), a European funded project managed by Cambridge University, has shown that the most effective learning vehicle for young members is demanding work, provided that there is organised support from mentors and colleagues (Waltham, 1999).

There is a good network of contacts across Europe for exploring common themes. One focus is to learn from the examples of good practice in employing organisations. A number of projects are exploring ways of helping engineers to carry out CPD more effectively. EUSCCCIP (Euro project for the use of standards in CPD for construction industry professionals) has established, and is testing, a model framework for CPD based on the processes of analysis, planning, action and review.

Continuing professional development has for many years worked through partnerships between individual engineers, academic institutions, employers and professional bodies. However, the changing focus towards competence-based outputs requires improved systems of support to engineers. Enhanced professional commitment provides a challenge to all the partners.

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KEY ISSUES IN THE DISCUSSION

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This final paper highlights key issues that emerged from the discussions which took place at the symposium. The varied backgrounds of the participants, and the contrasting occupational sectors from which they provided comments, provoked a valuable interchange of ideas. These ranged from the detailing of CPD principles and infrastructures to a less tidy exploration of the tensions and paradoxes surrounding professional development. The opening paper on 'Issues and Challenges in CPD' suggested four broad areas within which we might examine CPD issues: these now provide a frame for this summary of the main concerns emerging from the discussion of the papers. These areas are: terminology and territory; professions and professionalism; ways of looking at professional learning, and the individual and the organisation.

Terminology and Territory

Caution was expressed in the first paper about the use of the term 'lifelong learning' and about different understandings of 'continuing professional development'. This was reinforced in discussion. Participants agreed on the need to question the rhetoric associated with lifelong learning, to analyse critically the expressed aims of CPD initiatives and to investigate what actually takes place in practice. The notion that CPD could be characterised as a form of social control was recognised, though it was apparent that 'social control' was itself interpreted in different ways. Moving on from the explanation of principles and priorities given in the paper on CPD for healthcare professionals, participants posed further questions about the management of CPD. The exposition of policy on performance-related pay for teachers raised further concerns about CPD policy as a mechanism for shaping and linking professional development to a prescribed agenda. It was noticeable that these

issues were pursued more strongly in relation to the public sector professions, rather than in relation to accountancy or engineering.

Such observations led to the matter of what constitutes appropriate professional development. This goes beyond noting the limitations of job-specific training with short-term objectives. The example of how performance-related pay is being introduced in teaching demonstrated how time spent on CPD might be dominated by enabling teachers to meet targets which are by their very nature questionable, in some cases even at odds with basic assumptions about professional judgement. In such a case, the strength of central policy may be seen as undermining professional autonomy. Thus the 'territory' of CPD was seen to overlap that of the design of organisational systems.

Professions and Professionalism

The papers and discussion focused on 'professional' occupations, but a telling question, considered towards the end of the symposium, concerned the degree to which the training and development dilemmas under consideration should be characterised as exclusive to 'the professions': are developmental opportunities for professional people so markedly different from those for people with lower formal qualifications? Response to this point from representatives of professional associations recognised that the processes may often be the same or similar, but nevertheless justifiable distinctions exist, associated with the greater responsibility and accountability which the professional practitioner accepts, and the fact that public trust is invested in professional bodies to regulate services. This interchange returned us to the definitional and conceptual challenges outlined at the start of the day about traditional and evolving conceptions of 'profession'.

Historically, most attempts to conceptualise 'profession' have incorporated notions of altruism and ethics, of social responsibility and the value system which underpins 'professional' conduct. The idea of moral authority and professional values recurred in various ways during the discussion of different occupational sectors.

Changing attitudes to professional development were described, particularly the importance of considering career development in tandem with professional development. For the engineering professional bodies, this was a crucial link and, in this sector particularly, generational differences had been observed. Younger people especially were said to think increasingly in terms of career, and to see professional development in relation to that. One provocative view was that a stress on CPD may in fact threaten, rather than reinforce, a profession, for instance by closing off professional labour markets to broader development, causing inefficiencies and restricting mobility at a macro- level.

Ways of Learning

Some of the difficulties inherent in establishing a conceptual framework which can usefully inform CPD planning were set out in the opening paper. Some of these concerned how to treat the relationship between academic or theoretical knowledge and practice-based or experiential knowledge. What exactly is the knowledge which is the bedrock of professionalism? Professional skills and judgement are conventionally seen as the ability to cope with complex, non-routine situations, rather than simply the ability to operate within a restricted context according to a 'rule-book', but how do organisations successfully put in place opportunities to nurture professional expertise of this sort?

There are also challenges for individuals and for employers in the attempt to articulate tacit knowledge, recognise informal learning, and create a climate or context for professional learning which may not be predictable, rational or measurable. Examples given in the papers and subsequent discussion of work-based learning and of 'crisis teaching' in nursing (where factors involved in a critical event can be exploited on the spot for by a mentor or senior person), confirmed that there are no easy answers in this area.

It was noticeable that less attention was given by participants to exploring 'competence' than might have been expected. In the engineering professions

particularly, much work has been done in this area, but it attracted little discussion at this symposium.

The Individual and the Organisation

Discussion repeatedly touched on managerialism, and the degree to which in diverse occupational fields professional and managerial approaches might conflict. Whilst Ewart Keep proposes two discrete models, the 'professional' and the 'managerial' (with the latter in the ascendant in both business and government), Hoskin and colleagues, in their revised paper on accountancy, suggest that, in accountancy at least, there are complex relationships operating which require further analysis.

An important issue which was not explored fully during the symposium concerned the principles determining who makes the investment in professional development, and who, in practice, benefits as a result. The opening paper and that on health professionals pointed to resource concerns, whilst accountancy firms and professional institutes are investing large sums in professional development, but the matter of who pays drew less comment from participants than might have been predicted. It is right to remain cautious about any assumption that the employer will pay, especially when the onus for undertaking CPD is increasingly presented as a matter of individual professional responsibility, and when organisations exist which do not support any professional development activities.

Some emphasis was given to the idea of group learning rather than individual learning; a feature of engineering for instance is that frequently engineers work in teams, in small firms, and are very company-oriented. This brings us to an additional important factor, namely the generally accepted recognition that it is particularly hard for small and medium-sized enterprises to support CPD. However, in the view of some participants at the symposium, this formulation may override other elements which are equally important, and in fact some more dynamic SMEs could offer innovative models of encouraging CPD. Such questions confirm this as an area for further investigation.

An issue which cuts runs across all of the above, and which is a crucial matter for the Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance, concerns distinctions between macro-, meta- and micro-level initiatives and experience. The symposium papers and discussion focused mainly at the macro- level, but empirical investigation must pursue what actually happens at the level of the company, and how this inter-relates with the development of the individual. An apparently rational macro-level policy directive does not necessarily benefit a particular company (nor the individual professionals employed by the firm). Conversely, what is justifiable for the development of a specific organisation (and supposedly for its employees) may not be justifiable in a national context.

The Dialogue and Research Themes

The final messages from this symposium related to our attempts to cross boundaries and learn from each other. It was apparent that different discourses were being employed. More important, participants ranged from those with an operational brief to researchers whose agenda was altogether different. On the one hand, there are those who seek to bring people together, whose task is action-orientated or to put in place opportunities which will enable practitioners to develop their knowledge and skills. On the other hand there are researchers who are immersed in specific disciplinary worlds or fields of study. However, there are also many people in the 'no-man's land' of shared concerns, where the theory/practice dichotomy is now a dated concept. Theorising is taking place in practice situations and insights relevant to practice are emerging from research-led activity. The interchange at the first 'CPD Symposium' made that clear.

Finally, certain key areas for research seemed to emerge, sometimes implicitly rather than explicitly, from the discussion:

a) the relationship between CPD and the 'market' for the professional service in question, including public service strategies;

b) the ways in which different managerial and professional objectives are being resolved in relation to each other;

c) the potential development of 'profession-like' approaches further down the occupational spectrum;

d) the role of CPD in underpinning professional standards (from the point of view of the employer, the customer and the wider public) and its role in the construction of individual careers, and

e) the notion of 'professional learning' and the conditions that most effectively foster it.

Against the dialogue which began at this symposium, the research topics proposed in the presentations and papers, and the areas indicated above there are many directions in which fundamental and applied research on continuing professional development can develop, both to strengthen the theoretical ground in this field and to contribute to the development of policy and practice.

SKOPE Symposium: Continuing Professional Development: Looking Ahead
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Pembroke College, Oxford

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