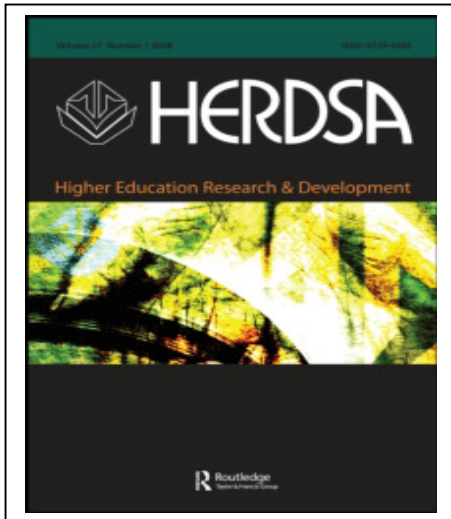# From a Curriculum that Integrates Work to a Curriculum that Integrates Life: Changing a University's Conceptions of Curriculum

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Abstract

Bringing about significant change in a mature and successful Work Integrated Learning (WIL) scheme is quite a difficult thing to accomplish. The University of Surrey, which has a long established WIL scheme based on year long professional training work placements, has embarked on a programme of research and development aimed at adapting and enhancing its WIL model for learning, by adopting a life-wide concept of learning and curriculum. The intention is to develop a new University Award through which an individual's life-wide learning enterprise can be encouraged, supported, valued and publicly recognized. This paper describes the concepts that are intended to inspire change and the initial steps to try to turn a good educational idea into new organizational practices.

Key Words: life-wide learning, life-wide curriculum, life-wide education,

Introduction

For over 50 years the University of Surrey has been at the forefront of the *work integrated learning* (WIL) movement in the UK through a curriculum model that requires programmes in all disciplines[1] to provide opportunities for learners to develop their professional capabilities through year long work placements that will lead to outcomes that are relevant to learners' programmes. The University uses the term Professional Training[2] to describe this type of WIL

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[1] With the exception of vocational health-related programmes that operate a fully integrated work-study programme
[2] http://www.surrey.ac.uk/professionaltraining/

curriculum and it has proved to be successful in enabling our graduates to secure employment on completion of their degree. Between 1996 and 2007, Surrey had an average unemployment rate 6 months after graduation of 2.2 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent: the lowest of any English university[3].

Taken at face value it would seem that the University of Surrey has a very effective educational model so why should we change it? Closer inspection indicates that, if we exclude programmes that have a statutory requirement for a curriculum that integrates professional practice and academic study (e.g. in health programmes), only 50% of our undergraduates participate in our *Professional Training* work placement scheme. Furthermore, there are concerns about the impact of the global recession on year long placement opportunities and the likely increase in fees [4].

We are in a classic change dilemma – do we sustain a proven model that seems to work well for a significant proportion of our students, or do we change what we are doing to adapt to changes in the external environment and try to add value to the experience and development of students who currently do not benefit from professional training?

The University, through the work of its Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTrE)[5], concluded that we needed to do both of these things, and proposed two complementary strategies. The first was to diversify our approaches to WIL by integrating forms of WIL that we do not currently practice – forms that do not require a commitment to a year long placement. The second was to develop a much broader conception of a curriculum to embrace the idea that learners gain valuable personal and professional development through life-experiences outside the current WIL curriculum. We are calling this a 'life-wide curriculum' to emphasise that the whole of a person's life is brought to bear on their unique learning project that enables them to become who they want to become.

This paper focuses on the second strategy. It shows outlines the concept of life-wide learning through a life-wide curriculum and shows how ideas that were presented at the 2008 World Association for Collaborative Education (WACE) conference in Sydney (Jackson, 2008b) are being turned into new educational practices.

New Proposition

SCEPTrE is attempting to add value to the existing model of a WIL curriculum by establishing a new educational proposition, and trying to engage the university in testing and evaluating the proposition through a number of strategies. These strategies are at three levels within the university: 1) political – trying to influence the senior managers and leaders of teaching and learning and professional training, 2) collegial – trying to influence the University's teaching

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[3] Based on date from the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA). http://www.hesa.ac.uk/
[4] An independent review is likely to recommend a progressive but rapid increase in fees once the Government takes the cap off in 2010.
[5] SCEPTrE is one of 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning established in England through a five year Government grant in 2005/06. http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/tinits/cetl/

and learning committees that make/approve educational policy, and 3) individual – trying to enthuse individuals with the ideas and involve them in adapting their practice or inventing new practice and influencing others they work with. A fourth level, mainly delivered through a series of national conferences, networking and wiki-based resources, is aimed at engaging the wider HE community in discussion about the concept of life-wide education[6]. The knowledge derived through this process of engaging the wider community provides a lever for change[7] and for development. We are also planning to involve some of the members of our external network in a benchmarking exercise aimed at comparing the products of learning (portfolios, reflective accounts and other artefacts), so they are helping us to understand the meaning of both process and outcome standards.

But change strategies that are fundamentally about persuading people to change their thinking and practices will not succeed without a strong compelling idea and this is where the idea of life-wide learning comes into play.

The idea that higher education is one component of a life-long process of learning is well established in educational policy and practice throughout the world. The idea of a life-wide learning is proposed to highlight the fact that at any point in time, for example while a learner is engaged in higher education, an individual's life contains many parallel and interconnected journeys and experiences and that these individually and collectively contribute to the ongoing personal and potentially professional development of the person. By reframing our perception of what counts as learning and developing the means of recognising and valuing learning that is not formally assessed within an academic programme, we can help learners develop a deeper understanding of how and what they are learning in the different parts of their lives. Heightened awareness is likely to help learners become more effective at learning through their own experiences.

The term life-wide curriculum was proposed by Jackson (2008a) to highlight the potential for integrating learning from the combination of formal and informal learning experiences that a learner participates in during their higher education experience. It is a useful educational concept if we want to promote a life-wide concept of learning. A life-wide curriculum seeks to highlight the potential for drawing learning from the diverse experiences that learners' encounter and create for themselves during their higher education experiences. It is an inclusive concept intended to recognise that universities are complex enterprises for learning and that many people (not just teachers) contribute to students' learning and development. It is an opportunity enhancing and enabling concept rather than a policy for making people do things they don't want to do. The concept is learner driven i.e. outside the requirements of the formal academic curriculum. A learner can choose or not choose to include her experiences and learning in her unique learning profile. The intention is not to force learners to account for their everyday experiences. Rather, the value in the idea is to encourage the university to think about learning in a more holistic way and to encourage, support and value this view of learning so that learners eventually see the benefits of viewing their lives in this way.

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[6] http://lifewidelearningconference.pbworks.com/
[7] 13 out of the 19 members of our institutional peer group are already doing something like this

The challenge for a university that adopts the idea of life-wide learning through a life-wide curriculum is to develop the means to support, recognise and value such learning. At the University of Surrey we are developing the idea of a Life-wide Learning Award. Figure 1 represents how a University Life-Wide Learning Award would complement the Honours Degree by recognising learning and achievement gained from a learner's experiences outside the academic programme and professional training experiences[8]. The life-wide curriculum embraces all parts of the diagram and a university that embraces these concepts would also be embracing the idea of life-wide education (Barnett, 2010).
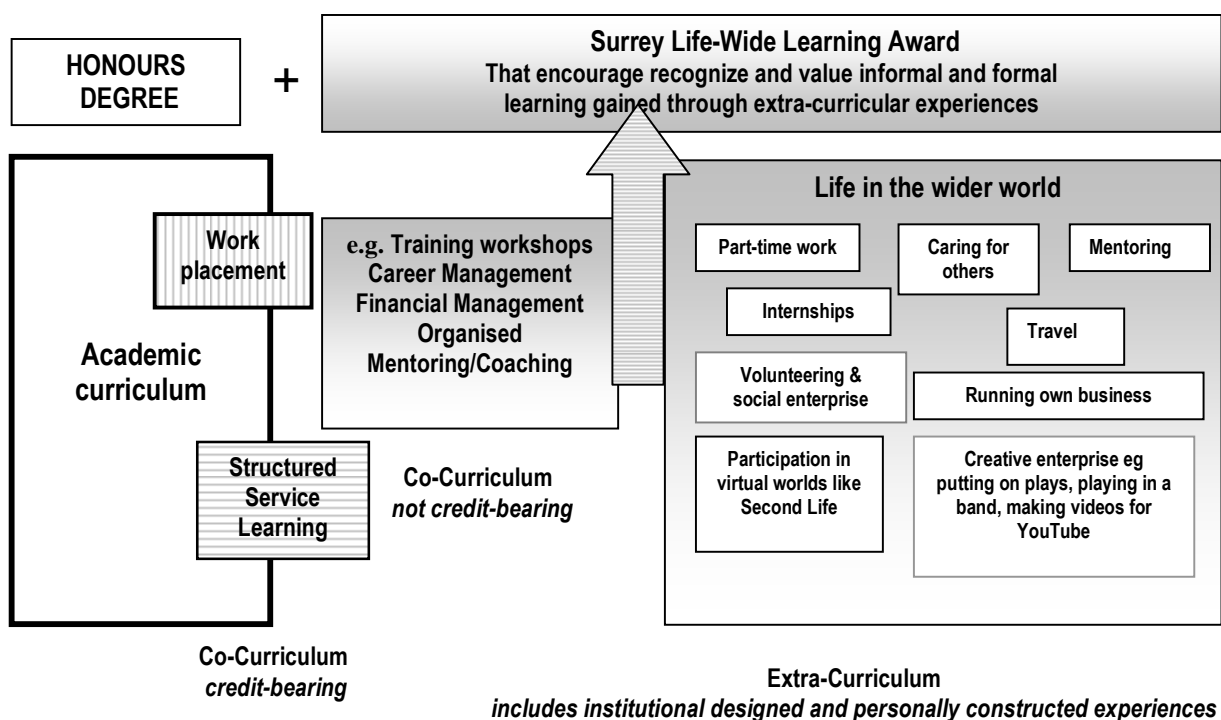

Figure 1 Representation of a Life-wide curriculum (Jackson 2010a)

This additional form of recognition of a learner's experiences and achievements fits well the strategic movement towards more comprehensive information outcomes from a higher education experience[9]. The proposed Higher Education Achievement Record – HEAR[10] (currently being piloted in a number of English Universities) is encouraging recognition of non-formal learning and Personal Development Planning (PDP), introduced in 2000 as part of the Progress File, is promoting learning practices that connect action planning, doing and reflecting – a fundamental epistemological feature of experience-based learning. Research conducted by

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[8] See http://lifewidelearning.pbworks.com and http://lifewidelearningconference.pbworks.com/ for updated elaborations of the life-wide learning and curriculum concept
[9] A policy introduced in 2000 known as the Progress File http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/progressFiles/guidelines/PDP/default.asp
[10] http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/oct/21/degree-marks-upgrade-comment

SCEPTrE (Rickett 2010) has shown that nearly 50 institutions have developed or are developing Award schemes similar to the scheme we are proposing at Surrey, to provide recognition for learning gained outside the credit-bearing curriculum. This is a national phenomenon not yet witnessed in other HE systems.

Learning Potential of a Life-Wide Curriculum

The most powerful argument for a life-wide curriculum is that it contains more potential for learning and personal development than any other curriculum! Adopting a life-wide curriculum changes our conception of what counts as learning and where learning occurs. It shifts higher education into a more experience-based model of learning (Andreason et al., 1995) i.e. the experience of the learner occupies central place in the learning process. This experience may comprise earlier events in the life of the learner, current life events, or those arising from the learner's participation in activities implemented by teachers and facilitators. A key element of experience-based learning is that learners analyse their experience by reflecting, evaluating and reconstructing it in order to draw meaning from it in the light of prior experience.

An experience-rich curriculum that engages with the full breadth of a learner's life also provides an environment within which a more holistic conception of learning and individuals' sense of being in the world can be appreciated. We can appreciate much more (Beard et al., 2007, p. 5) 'learning through being, doing, sensing, feeling, knowing and changing'.

Learning that is grounded in experience, especially when it is a rich, meaningful and immersive experience, has the potential to contribute to all forms of learning identified by Marton et al. (1983, pp. 283-284) and most importantly support development of the most elaborate forms of learning. Experience of working and learning in different environments is also essential to developing a repertoire of 'ways of knowing' and 'being able to come to know'. Experiential knowing is part of action and it lies at the heart of the epistemology of practice. It complements but is different to explicit and tacit knowledge and can only be gained through acts of doing and being (Cook & Brown, 1999).

Baxter Magolda (2001) identified four qualitatively different *ways of knowing*. These are:
- *Absolute knowing*: knowledge exists in an absolute form, it is either right or wrong
- *Transitional knowing*: knowledge is certain in some areas and uncertain in other areas
- *Independent knowing:* knowledge is uncertain. Everyone has their own beliefs
- *Contextual knowing*: knowledge is contextual. One judges on the basis of evidence in context.

If a learner only possesses a way of knowing that is absolute, then he or she is unlikely to cope well with problem-solving in the conditions of uncertainty that characterize the real world. However, a student who possesses an independent way of knowing is likely to feel more confident and be more effective in such a situation. A student who has learnt in lots of different experience-based contexts will realize that knowledge in real world problem working is often strongly situated and contextual. A way of knowing is more than an academic cognitive skill that can be "developed" through carefully designed learning activities. It is firmly a part of who you are – your identity. In other words, changing one's way of knowing is to change as a person.

Our line of reasoning is that if we are to claim that higher education is preparing learners for a complex world (another concept that underlies the SCEPTrE enterprise) then we and they must pay particular attention to the epistemology of practice(s) in the social, professional and working worlds that they will enter when they leave the academic environment. The epistemology of (professional) work practice (coming to know what to do through doing in a specific situation or context drawing on past experiences which includes learned theory) can only be learned through the experience of practising with other practitioners. The epistemology of practice pays particular attention to the idea of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning for a complex world requires learners to appreciate and experience the epistemology of practice in professional situations that are relevant to chosen career pathways and more generally in other social practice settings embodied in the idea of a life-wide curriculum.

Raelin (2007) identifies the building blocks of an epistemology of practice as:
- *Extensive use of tacit knowledge* – the tacit processes that practitioners use as they work through the problems and challenges of daily practice. Such knowledge is deeply rooted in action and involvement in a specific context in a specific time. But while people may be knowledgeable about what they do and can do it, they may not be able to explain how they know what to do.
- *Critical reflection* – the thinking capacity to make sense of their own practice and experiences and mindful habit of doing it. Or the ability to think about how their actions resulted in a particular outcome. This ability results in the creation of a personal 'real time' learning environment through which beliefs, assumptions and mental models as well as actions, can be tested and evaluated.
- *Mastery* – people develop their expertise not only by repeated practice in a single domain but by acquiring skills in multiple contexts. Mastery is developed through an appropriate apprenticeship in which novice practitioners are exposed to embodied practice, apply and develop their own practice, are encouraged and given feedback on their performance and gradually take on more and more responsibility. Developing mastery is coupled to the development of tacit knowledge and knowing, and the ability to evaluate and learn from own experiences through critical reflection.

Michael Eraut's more pragmatic visualisation of an epistemology of professional practice (Eraut 2007, 2008), complements Railin. He notes that the basic epistemology of practice involves the professional actions of:
- *Assessing situations* (sometimes briefly, sometimes involving a long process of *investigation and enquiry*) and continuing to monitor the situation;
- *Deciding what, if any, action to take*, both immediately and over a longer period (either on one's own or as a leader or member of a team);
- *Pursuing an agreed course of action*, performing professional actions - modifying, consulting, evaluating and reassessing as and when necessary;
- *Metacognitive monitoring of oneself*, people needing attention and the general progress of the case, problem, project or situation; and sometimes also learning through reflection on the experience.

His empirical observations of how people learn in workplace settings, either as explicit learning activity or a by-product of work, provides the basis for new and useful tools to help learners in

work situations to observe themselves and others, and think about what they are doing (and the effects of what they are doing) more wisely.

This basic epistemology used by professionals to evaluate a situation – decide how to respond – do something and change what we do when we see and understand its effect – is also the basic epistemology we use in other areas of our lives and it seems reasonable to infer that we can develop and practice this epistemology through life experiences outside a professional work context (a learner's life-wide curriculum). For example, a student engaged in part-time work or a community volunteering project will be using the same basic epistemology to deal with a difficult customer or team mate as a seasoned professional working on a complicated problem with a client. We can test this by questioning a learner about the process they went through when deciding and implementing a course of action. Developing deeper awareness and understanding of this epistemology of practice can be designed into reflective processes embedded within a life-wide learning / life-wide curriculum scheme.

At the heart of the life-wide learning / life-wide curriculum idea is the deep moral purpose of fostering learners' will or the spirit to be and become (Barnett, 2004, 2009). An individual's life-wide enterprise contains far more opportunity for them to exercise their will than that part of their life that is only associated with an academic programme. But will alone is not enough; alongside this intentionality the learner must have the agency (the forethought, capacity, skill, behaviours and metacognitive powers) to engage in ways that will enable her to act, influence events, achieve her goals and learn through the experience. She must be, or learn to be, an agentic learner (Bandura, 2001). The work of Stephen Billett (2009) points the way to how we encourage the development of agentic professionals. We argue that a life-wide learning enterprise contains far more opportunity and potential for the development of human agency (or capability) than an educational programme that is dominated by learning about a subject within an institutional environment. This connects both the moral and educational arguments for implementing the idea of a life-wide curriculum in university education.
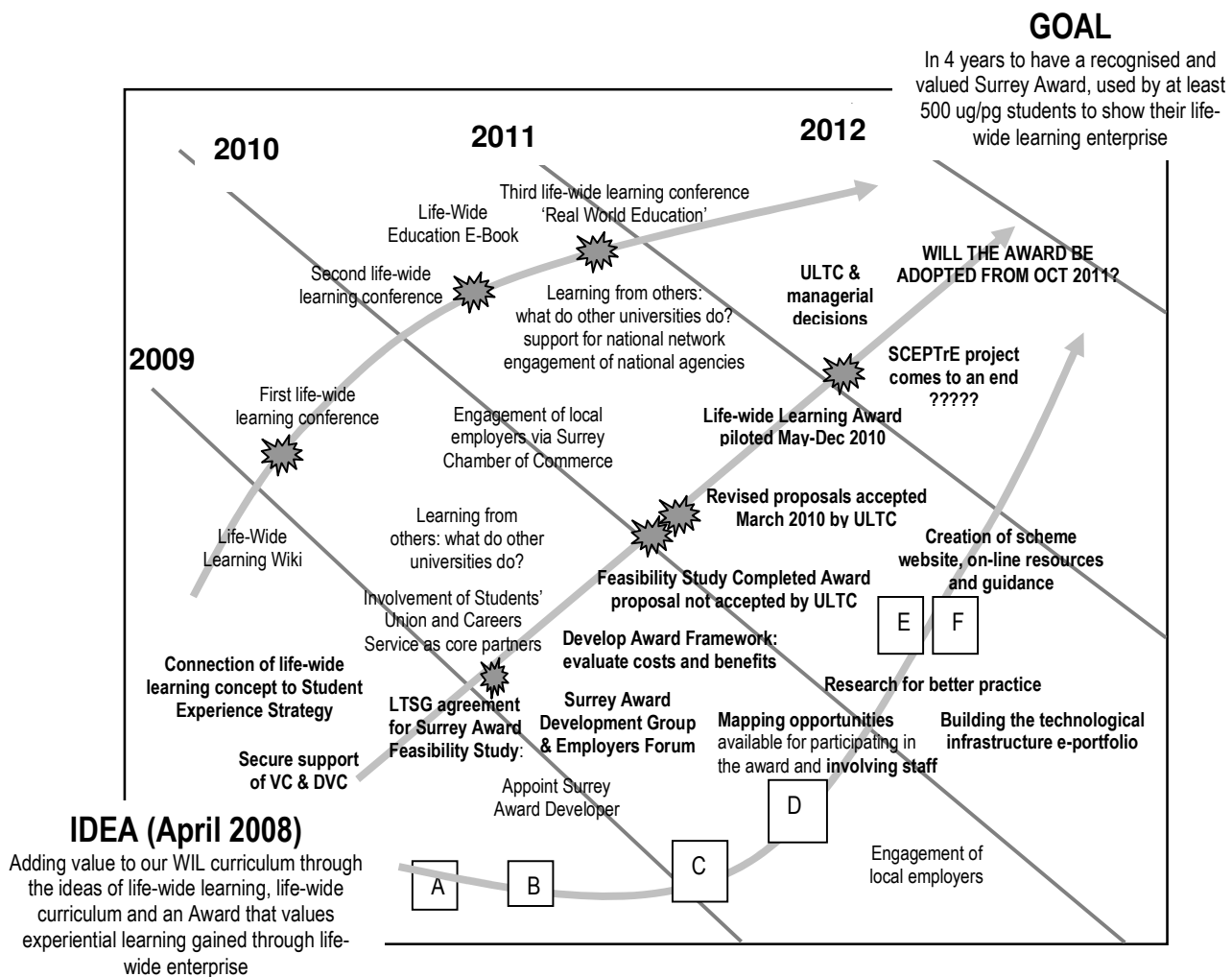
Changing a University's Conceptions of Curriculum

But it is one thing to have an educational idea that has the potential to change a University and quite another to actually change thinking and practice of the members of the University. The second part of this paper explains how the University has begun to introduce and implement the idea. Figure 2 shows a plan of actions intended to help the University move from a position in April 2008 when the life-wide learning / life-wide curriculum idea did not exist, to an imagined (idealised) situation in 2011 at the end of the SCEPTrE project.

Anyone who has tried to bring about significant change in educational practices in a university knows how difficult it is to achieve when the people who must implement change have near total autonomy over their practice and they are quite happy with the way things are. Bringing about change on any significant scale is difficult, messy and full of contest, conflict, avoidance and non-engagement. In introducing the idea of a Surrey Award we have stressed that this is not a threat to the existing approach that has proved to be successful. Rather, our life-wide learning / curriculum idea is intended to add value to this approach for students who participate in professional training, and to extend opportunity for the recognition of experiential learning to those students who do not participate in our professional training scheme. Putting student interests and their voices at the heart

of the project is an important part of building a compelling case, and our intention is to create a lot of stories of students' life-wide learning enterprises.

In planning a significant change process in a university there is so much that cannot be predicted – a plan can at best only provide a sense of what the planner imagines has to be done at any stage in the project. It must also contain the space for emergent opportunity or responding to the unanticipated consequences of actions. In a dynamic change environment it is much easier to fill in the details of a plan after it has been completed! It is also sometimes wiser to wait until something happens in order to know how to respond and capitalize on a new situation. Our plan (often improvised) for introducing, developing and implementing the idea of an Award, to recognize and value learning achieved outside the academic curriculum, contains three main strands of activity (Figure 2).

GOAL
In 4 years to have a recognised and valued Surrey Award, used by at least 500 ug/pg students to show their life-wide learning enterprise

2010

2011

2012

Third life-wide learning conference 'Real World Education'

Life-Wide Education E-Book

Second life-wide learning conference

Learning from others: what do other universities do? support for national network engagement of national agencies

ULTC & managerial decisions

WILL THE AWARD BE ADOPTED FROM OCT 2011?

SCEPTrE project comes to an end ?????

2009

First life-wide learning conference

Engagement of local employers via Surrey Chamber of Commerce

Life-wide Learning Award piloted May-Dec 2010

Life-Wide Learning Wiki

Learning from others: what do other universities do?

Revised proposals accepted March 2010 by ULTC

Creation of scheme website, on-line resources and guidance

Involvement of Students' Union and Careers Service as core partners

Feasibility Study Completed Award proposal not accepted by ULTC

Develop Award Framework: evaluate costs and benefits

E   F

Connection of life-wide learning concept to Student Experience Strategy

LTSG agreement for Surrey Award Feasibility Study:

Surrey Award Development Group & Employers Forum

Mapping opportunities available for participating in the award and **involving staff**

Research for better practice

Building the technological infrastructure e-portfolio

Secure support of VC & DVC

Appoint Surrey Award Developer

D

IDEA (April 2008)
Adding value to our WIL curriculum through the ideas of life-wide learning, life-wide curriculum and an Award that values experiential learning gained through life-wide enterprise

A   B   C

Engagement of local employers

Figure 2: Developing the Life-Wide Learning Award

The three strands of activity – scholarly, political and practical development of the core ideas are shown by heavy grey lines.
Building Blocks: A – Learning through Experience Certificate, B – New share experience website to facilitate reflective blogging. C – New Learning through Part-Time Work and Volunteering Certificates D- New life-wide Award Annual Prize E – New Award website www.surreylifewideaward.net F – Lifewide Learning Award Framework
Abbreviations: VC/DVC – Vice-Chancellor & Deputy VC, LTSG – Learning and Teaching Strategy Group, ULTC – University Learning and Teaching Committee

a) Conceptual Development of the Idea

The starting point was an inspiring idea and the belief that the moral purpose within the idea is worth pursuing. The staff of SCEPTrE also believed that the idea has relevance to the University of Surrey and that it could be turned into meaningful educational practices. A working paper outlining the idea was created in April 2008 and tested first with family and colleagues. It was discussed with the Vice-Chancellor (who fortunately considered it to be a good idea), and with SCEPTrE's Executive and Steering Committees. It was refined and connected to the University's first Student Experience Strategy published in July 2008. The idea was presented at the WACE Conference in Sydney in September 2008 and incorporated into the central theme of the University's learning and teaching conference in March 2009 'Learning to be professional through a life wide curriculum'[11]. The conference was used to test the proposition and to draw scholars and practitioners into the process of evaluation and elaboration.

Between June and December 2009, through an iterative process involving the people who contributed to the Award Development Group, we designed a framework and began to consider the ways in which the award extended the possibility of encouraging and demonstrating integrative learning (Jackson, 2009). Following rejection of this framework by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee in January 2010, we went back to the drawing board to design a simpler (cheaper) framework that still adhered to the educational principles of life-wide learning and this triggered another phase of conceptual development which is still going on (May 2010). In April 2010 we hosted a national conference attended by over 100 people from over 60 institutions to explore the idea of life-wide learning and share experiences of operating co-curricular and extra-curricular awards (http://lifewidelearningconference.pbworks.com/).

Most recently, Jackson (2010b) evolved a set of propositions to guide curriculum designs that will better prepare learners for the complexities that they will encounter in their life and used these to show how a life-wide curriculum is more likely to meet this challenge.

b) Political and Collegial Development of the Idea

At the start of our development work in 2008 we secured the Vice-Chancellor's support. His explicit statement of support, incorporated into the working paper, proved to be invaluable. *'Surrey enjoys an unrivalled position with its professional training year and employment record for our graduates, which many years ago grew out of a clear understanding of how to relate higher education to the needs of employers and employees. SCEPTrE's ideas for introducing the concept of a 'life-wide' curriculum to address learning in a complex world, could prove equally valuable in helping our graduates succeed in the future and I encourage you to support this initiative'.* (Surrey Award Ideas Paper April 2009). His endorsement of the life-wide curriculum idea conveyed the message that there was top management support for the idea and that it fitted with the leader's strategic vision for the university.

Realizing that the idea of life-wide learning stood little chance of implementation unless it was embedded in the University's policies for learning and teaching, we tried to influence the architect of a new Student Experience Strategy which was being formed in 2008 around what the university

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[11] http://learnigtobeprofessional@pbwiki.com

considered was its brand distinctiveness – 'a more complete education'. The life-wide learning idea helped the people who were creating policy to explain their concept more fully and an alliance of ideas and interests was formed. The life-wide curriculum idea was incorporated into the strategy, and SCEPTrE given the role of developing the idea.

In November 2008 we embedded our vision within our Fellowship policy which provides small grants to talented teachers and encourages further innovation in line with this vision. Our vision-building process was boosted by a statement from the Vice-Chancellor in the foreword to the programme for the University's Teaching and Learning conference in March 2009.

> 'We are inspired by a vision of a higher education experience that recognizes that students are engaged in learning in all aspects of their lives throughout their time at Surrey…..it is this 'whole of life' learning that enables students to develop through a combination of academic study, professional placement, co-curricular opportunity and learning through life, their unique identity and spirit to be who they want to be and help them realize their full potential as a human being.'

In February 2009 the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy Group approved a Development and Feasibility Study for an Award that would recognize and value learning gained outside the academic curriculum. This provided SCEPTrE with both a policy and a strategic mandate for its development work.

It was only when we had these explicit political and strategic endorsements and policy connections that we had the authority to develop the structures that are enabling a more collegial approach to the development of the award framework.

An Award Development Group was established between July-December 2009, with membership from Faculty's, Central Services and the Students' Union. A student working group and an employer's forum were also created. The feasibility study and award framework developed through these processes were considered by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) in January 2010. It was not a good set of circumstances for the presentation (recession, cost cutting, new Deputy Vice-Chancellor with no knowledge of the development work and a clash of interests around the table) and SCEPTrE was asked to create a more streamlined, cheaper structure. A revised framework was considered and accepted at the March 2010 meeting of ULTC and a University-wide pilot was initiated in May 2010 to be completed by December 2010.

This compressed history simply shows the complexity of the journey of change within our university. A journey that is full of effort, politics, presentation and debate, potential conflict and continuous negotiation and adaptation. A journey that requires resilience and perseverance to create practice that is acceptable to the institution as well as adhering to the educational values and principles of the designers and agents of educational change.

c) Practical Development of the Idea

Turning good ideas into real, effective, sustainable and valued practices is the ultimate goal. It involves the many practitioners who could contribute to the new award framework, to take ownership for the ideas and actively engage in creating new practices and infrastructures.

The development and feasibility study involved:
- Selling ideas and involving people in their further development
- Designing an Award Framework (Figure 3), and the rules that will govern it
- Mapping opportunities for life-wide learning on campus and persuading those responsible for such opportunities to participate in the scheme
- Creating, piloting and evaluating the building blocks – learning through experience certificates
- Finding out what other universities are doing, how they encourage, support and recognise life-wide learning.
- Creating the technical infrastructures necessary to support an award (share experience website)
- Developing capacity for mentoring
- Developing an appreciation of the costs and benefits of such an award.

An Award Development Group met four times in 2009 and was highly influential in shaping an award framework. But the framework developed through this collegial process was not supported by ULTC. This precipitated a significant re-design by the SCEPTrE team. The simpler and less resource intensive structure shown in Figure 3 was approved by ULTC in March 2010 and is now being piloted.
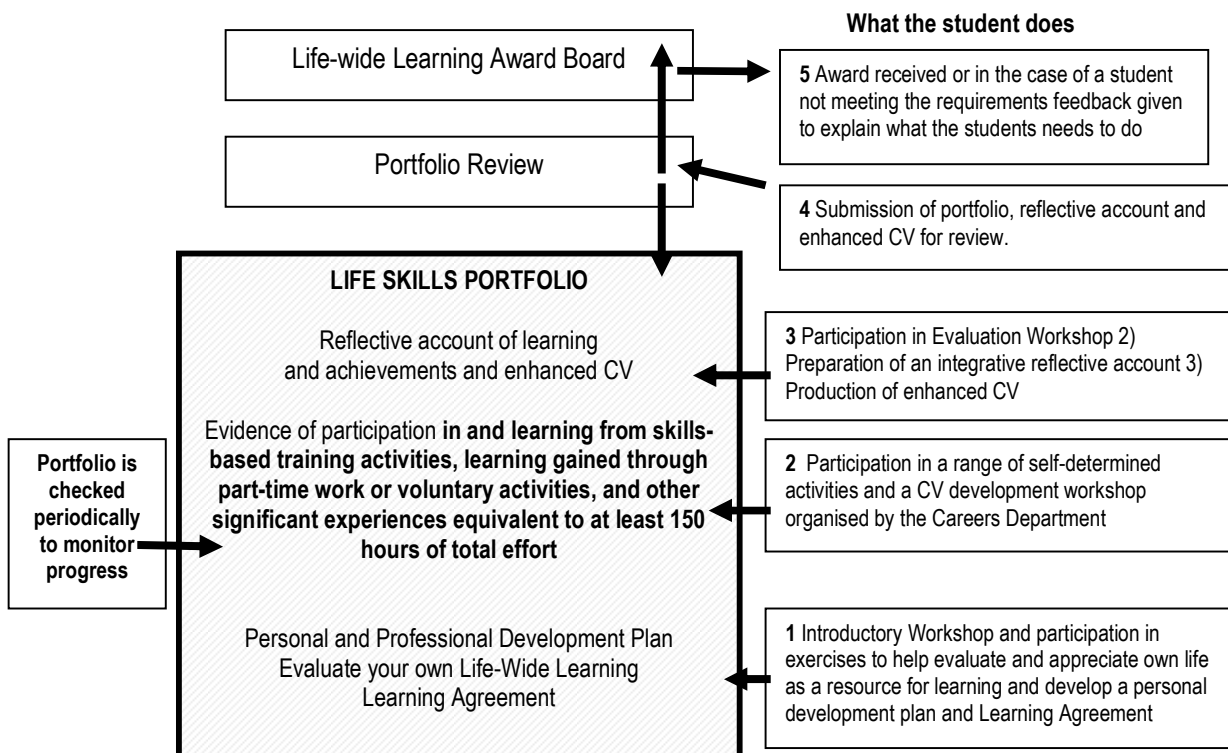
Figure 3 The Surrey Life-Wide Learning Award Framework

To achieve the award the student must:
1) Participate in a self-managed personal and professional development process, taking responsibility for creating a personal - professional development plan, engaging in self-determined activities and experiences and periodically reviewing their own development. Activities are likely to include a mix of skills-based training activities, learning gained through part-time work or voluntary activities, and other significant activities defined by the scheme (open to negotiation with scheme coordinator). Any qualifications gained externally, for example a national volunteering award, can also be included.
2) Participate in three workshops to facilitate self-evaluation, personal development planning and CV preparation.
3) Create a Life-Skills Portfolio to record and demonstrate how learning is gained and integrated through a variety of life experiences including: 1) skills training on or off-campus 2) experiential learning through work, volunteering or other significant activities.
4) Prepare a reflective account (about 2000 words) to summarise the learning and achievements gained (and often already gained) through the experiences documented in the portfolio.
5) Prepare an enhanced CV to demonstrate increased self-awareness and show how their development has added value to their employability prospects.

The award framework and the learning activities promoted through the award are shown in Figure 3. The total effort required to gain the award, including planning and evaluation workshops, portfolio creation, engagement in life-wide learning experiences, and preparation of a reflective account and an enhanced CV is about 150 hours.

Changing a University: Looking Back

We are under no illusions about the difficulty of bringing about significant change in <u>our</u> University. We are still in the development process so we don't yet know whether we will be successful in persuading the university to make the change we are trying to make. Thanks to the global recession and cuts in public finances we are now in a very different place to when we started this project two years ago. That is all part of being in the real world and that is the context that we now have to work with and we cannot frame, design and deliver our change without being cognisant of this situation.

What we can comment on is the process of change we have tried to facilitate. 'Where there is a will there is a way' so the age old saying goes, and developing an institutional will to change and become something different is what lies at the heart of any change process that affects the whole organization. The challenge for any broker of educational and organizational change is to help the university move from the familiar, the tried and the tested, in to an unfamiliar and uncertain practice world. The role is one of stimulating fresh ways of thinking while containing and alleviating anxiety as to where such thinking will take the organization. It involves trying to engage those who don't want to be involved and harnessing the talents and energies of those who do, or who can be persuaded.

'If you want to change an organization you have to change the conversations' (Seele, 2003, p3)**.** Looking back over the last 18 months it is clear that much of our effort has been expended in trying to change the conversations. The main emphasis has been on trying to develop an institutional will to broaden conceptions of learning by:
1) creating compelling stories for why we need to change and how we might change

2) persuading key people (both institutional and curriculum leaders) of the potential value for the change, encouraging them to envisage and talk about a new sort of vision
3) trying to add scholarly substance to the story of change by engaging other scholars in the process of explanation
4) gaining collegial buy-in for development work
5) building resources and capacities to support the development work
6) involving people in development work on the building blocks for implementation
7) gaining the views of key stakeholders (staff, students and local employers).

Michael Fullan (2003) in his excellent book 'Change Forces with a Vengeance' provides a deceptively simple but powerful set of principles for accomplishing systemic change, remembering that people in the system must end up owning the problem and be the agents of the solution. The change agents role is to create the conditions and processes that will enhance the likelihood that we move the path of increasing greater ownership and commitment:

- Start with the notion of moral purpose, key problems/challenges, desirable directions but don't lock in.
- Create communities and opportunities for interaction around theses ideas.
- Ensure that quality information infuses interaction and related deliberations.
- Look for and extract promising patterns i.e. consolidate gains and build on them.

We have found these principles to be extremely useful and I try to embed them in our change work. Looking back we started with a vision: a vision that was based on helping students to be better prepared for the uncertain and unknowable world that lies ahead of them. Our moral purpose is to improve students' learning and the opportunities they have for gaining the recognition they deserve for making their own education more complete. We have identified a sense of direction through our life-wide learning and life-wide curriculum ideas and have tried to turn these into a concrete framework that our practice communities (both academic and non-academic) can engage with. We have tried to draw in all relevant communities (students and employers) as well as staff. We have created opportunities for people to talk about these ideas and have sponsored experiments like our learning through experience certificates to encourage people to create examples of new practice that helps us move forward. We have tried to provide good quality information through our ideas papers and tried to show people that their ideas have been used. We are constantly on the look out for the sparks that will ultimately ignite the fire.

Looking Forward

We are involved in a highly emergent change process that is ultimately about changing culture, and this involves changing the paradigm[12] at the heart of how we conceptualize the curriculum and learning.

'Most change programmes .... try to effect change by looking at structures, systems and processes. Experience shows us that these initiatives usually have a limited success. A lot of

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[12] 'a self-consistent set of ideas and beliefs which acts as a filter, influencing how we perceive and how we make sense' (Seele, 2006, p4)

energy (and money) is put into the change programme, with all the usual communication exercises, consultations, workshops, and so on. In the first few months things seem to be changing but gradually the novelty and impetus wears off and the organisation settles back into something like its previous configuration. The reason for this is simple, though often overlooked—unless the *paradigm* at the heart of the culture is changed there will be no lasting change' (Seele, 2006, p4**).**

We recognize this in our work, and we have invented (in part through interaction with one of our Fellows) our concept of life-wide learning through a life-wide curriculum as a way of explaining the transformation in thinking and practice we are trying to create. In trying to engage the university in ways that might eventually change the paradigm that currently underlies our conception of a curriculum that supports integrative learning and complex achievements (Jackson, 2009) we have discovered that development and implementation has to progress simultaneously in at least three dimensions – conceptual, practical and political/collegial. Ideas come first and at the conceptual level we are trying to evolve our ideas in the context in which they are going to be applied while drawing in other good educational thinkers to test and develop our thinking, and ideas developed in other universities to expand our horizons. Our vehicles for public exploration are discussion meetings, ideas papers and wikis to enable people to contribute to the development of ideas and practices. We also intend to hold a conference and initiate an e-book to encourage the sharing of practices within the 50 universities that have, or are developing, practice in this area.

The immediate challenge is to secure the formal commitment of the University to implementing an Award Framework. In the next few months we have to persuade the university that what we are trying to do is central to its vision for the educational experiences and development of our students. By connecting our Surrey Award enterprise to the central idea in our Student Experience Strategy of a 'more complete education', we are giving meaning and substance to that idea but it requires a lot more than this to persuade a University that this is the concept at the heart of its learning enterprise.

Students must be intimately involved in building the case for an Award – without their continued and growing support for and involvement in the Award there is little point in investing in the infrastructure or the development of ideas. We introduced the idea of life-wide learning to the student community through annual Life-wide Learning Prizes[13] – a self nominated process that focuses attention on students' commitment to making their own educational experience more complete through the things they do outside their programme. In the two years it has been running over 100 students have entered the competition providing us with our first detailed insight into the how students see their life as an enterprise for learning and personal development. The many inspiring accounts have reinforced our belief that we are doing the right thing.

In January 2010 we invited students to complete an on-line survey aimed at quantifying their engagement in life-wide learning. Over 60% of 309 respondents told us that they would value some form of recognition for learning and development gained outside the academic curriculum.

We also see the business community as key allies and in persuading the University of the value of an Award. In September 2009 we established a small forum for discussion and the employer member of

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[13] http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/content/lifewide-learning-prize

our Steering Committee is chairing the forum. The opportunity to engage local employer networks in the development of the award provides new possibilities for connecting the university to this community and giving them a stake in the university. The involvement of our Careers Service which has the remit for employer liaison, is very important in this respect.

There is much to do and time is running out for SCEPTrE as external funding ceases in March 2011. The recession and cuts in public funding have hit our university hard and it is the worst possible time to be trying to introduce new structures that add to costs. Yet investing in these forms of educational enterprise is likely to hold the key to new forms of education in the future. Furthermore, with over 50 universities already engaged in these sorts of scheme, how can we not participate? But we know that we have to win the educational arguments first.

What happens to SCEPTrE is not as important as what happens to the ideas and practices that have been sown and grown through the project. The challenge for the University is to nurture and sustain these ideas and practices beyond the passion, energy and existence of SCEPTrE.

For an up to date view of developments visit: http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/

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