

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Education

**Collaborative partnerships for curriculum development: an analysis of
the critical factors in the development of policy-led undergraduate
programmes**

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ABSTRACT

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**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: AN
ANALYSIS OF THE CRITICAL FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY-
LED UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

by Rosalind Foskett

This research focuses on the establishment of partnerships between higher education, further education and employers to develop new undergraduate programmes. The partnerships are a response to government policy which, since 1997, has encouraged institutions to work with employers to develop new programmes which promote workforce development and social inclusion.

The research was a collective case study of collaborative curriculum development. Two undergraduate programmes in each of three HEIs provided the context, with each partnership including further education and employer organisations. Evidence was drawn from documentary analysis, interviews and a questionnaire survey.

This research focuses on three key aspects of partnerships for curriculum development. Firstly, the analysis considers the reasons for partners becoming involved. The evidence suggests that each partner seeks to achieve a mixture of mission-related, developmental and business benefits, but their willingness to be explicit about these aims varies with the perceived sensitivity of each aim. From this a model is developed which shows the similarities and differences between partners in terms of their perception of benefits and thus their motivation for being involved.

Secondly, analysis of the barriers which beset partnership and curriculum development suggests a three dimensional typology (based on prevalence, response, and significance) which can be used to understand why some partnerships get into difficulties and why some fail.

Thirdly, the experiences of partners in overcoming the barriers they face are used to identify critical success factors in partnership for curriculum development.

The study concludes by developing a unifying model of the processes at work in collaborative curriculum development. This shows how, as collaboration proceeds and those involved tackle difficulties, the individual players become part of a functioning partnership.

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This work is dedicated to my parents, my children and my husband.

List of Abbreviations Used

APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
ASN	Additional Student Numbers
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CSJ	Centre for Social Justice
CVCP	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Employment
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DipHE	Diploma of Higher Education
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EHEI	Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative
Fd	Foundation Degree
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEU	Further Education Unit
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDMI	Guide Dog Mobility Instructor
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
HEWR	Higher Education/Work Relations

HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILA	Individual Learning Accounts
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSE	London School of Economics
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
MSU	Manpower Services Unit
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NSTF	National Skills Task Force
NU	New University
OU	Old University
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
ROSLA	Raising of the School Leaving Age
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TQA	Teaching Quality Assessment
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UC	University College
Ufi	University for Industry
WP	Widening Participation

Chapter 1 Rationale and Introduction to the Research

1.1 Introduction

Like any other area of social activity, education goes through phases of change that fundamentally affect how it operates. Priorities for change may be intrinsic as new ways of doing things are sought in response to some perceived need of practitioners. Alternatively, they may be extrinsic as external agencies within society impose content, methods or structures that they think will 'improve' education. We live in a global society in which many governments have moved towards a decentralised model of service provision. In Britain, this is particularly true of the Education and Health sectors but it affects all public service sectors to some degree.

In order to be successful, it is argued, organisations cannot work alone but must co-operate and collaborate and work across the boundaries of their professional operation (Huxham, 1996). In Britain partnership is a key part of the modernisation agenda which has been central to government policy since Tony Blair became Prime Minister in 1997. The aim of this research is to look at collaboration with respect to curriculum change in higher education (HE) (Wildridge *et al*, 2004). Two key policies provide the focus for an evaluation of the critical success factors for these partnerships: the pledge that the government has made to widen participation (DfEE, 2000b) and the desire to make the sector work more closely with business to assist workforce modernisation (DfEE, 1998).

HE is under significant pressure from government to make changes to ensure its future well-being as a sector. The 2003 White Paper describes it as '*at serious risk of decline*' and in need of further change if '*the excellence of the sector as a whole*' is to be assured (DfES, 2003a, p 13). A key event

in recent change in HE occurred in 1996 with the setting up of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education by the then Secretaries of State for Education and Employment, under the chairmanship of Sir Ron Dearing. The terms of reference signalled a wide brief for the Committee:

'To make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years...'
(Dearing, 1997, p 5)

The impact of the recommendations of the Dearing Report and the reports on post-compulsory education that followed, such as the Kennedy Report (FEFC, 1997) which dealt with the further education (FE) sector and the Fryer Report (Fryer, 1997) which tackled the issues of lifelong learning, are beginning to change how institutions operate and generate their strategies for development.

Successive governments have tackled educational change starting with the school sector under the Thatcher governments (1979 – 1990), for example through their introduction of a National Curriculum in 1988 (HMSO, 1988), and then continued with the FE sector, for example in the emphasis on skills development (eg DfEE, 2001). The curriculum in both sectors has been altered fundamentally and it has been used as a tool to implement further wide-reaching changes in policy and practice. In HE, direct control over what is taught and how has not been so accessible for the government because universities are independent institutions. However, the changed nature of curriculum in FE and schools is beginning to have a knock-on effect on HE courses (Dearing, 1997). In addition, governments have implemented direct changes to HE, such as the introduction of student fees and the attendant consumer forces (HMSO, 2004), an agenda for vocational education and skills, and new curriculum frameworks such as foundation degrees (HEFCE,

2000). The sector, therefore, is facing considerable external pressure for change.

The impact of universities on education in schools and colleges has always been an accepted part of curriculum change particularly through the control over the examination system (Hoyle, 1969b; Maclure, 1989; Kelly, 1999) – content has often been determined by academics and modes of delivery, such as modularity, are an accepted part of the AS/A level programmes. Although this influence continues, changes in teaching, learning and student support that are now accepted in the other sectors are also changing the way HE institutions (HEIs) view the curriculum. Many HEIs (even research-led institutions) are now engaged in activities such as baseline assessment, learning styles analysis and the provision of tailored learner support services.

Partnership and collaboration are being recognised as significant ways of producing curricula to attract the 'hard-to-reach' student i.e. those potential students who up until now have not entered HE. Layered on to this national agenda for change are the effects of globalisation and the broadening of the competitor base to encompass all HEIs worldwide. New information technologies, virtual learning environments and greater speed of travel have all reduced geographical space and have seemingly made the HE marketplace more crowded (Thorne, 1999; Maier and Warren, 2000). Only the fit will survive this crowding. The accepted wisdom is that the HE curriculum has to change - the debate is about the nature of the change and the power of control.

This research focused on one aspect of curriculum change – the development of collaborative partnerships to effect innovation in HE. It highlighted two themes of government policy (workforce development and widening participation), investigated how partnerships for curriculum

development operate, and examined the critical factors in their success. It explored why working in partnership is encouraged, why individuals and institutions get involved, how such partnerships are developed and the challenges that face them. Through qualitative analysis and a collective case study, the investigation explored the elements that promote collaborative partnerships and allow them to either flourish or fail.

1.2 The Research Questions

The research focussed on three principal questions. Firstly, **why do HEIs, further education colleges (FECs) and employers involve themselves in collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level?** As other studies have shown, collaborative working is not easy and is intensive in terms of time and resources (for example IPHI, 2001 and Hudson and Hardy, 2002). The aim was to investigate the reasons for the participants involving themselves in this difficult task and the benefits that accrued - to them personally, to their students and to their institutions or businesses.

Secondly, **how do the barriers to collaborative partnership affect the processes involved in curriculum development in HE?** A review of the literature (Chapter 3) suggested a number of barriers affecting collaborative arrangements. Although there is a rich literature on the nature of partnership, particularly in the Health Service (Wildridge *et al*, 2004), little has been written which specifically investigates the nature of collaborative partnerships for curriculum development in HE. This research investigated the processes of undergraduate curriculum development within collaborative partnerships, the barriers that emerged and how they were overcome.

The third research question was: **how can the process of collaborative curriculum development be facilitated to encourage the government's**

policy objectives of widening participation in HE and of workforce development? If this mode of working is to make a difference and produce the required results, lessons need to be learnt from current practice to assist those engaged in curriculum development in the future. All too often, practitioners are engaged in replicating errors of past attempts to change curriculum and reinventing processes, and although learning from mistakes can be a valuable lesson, it represents duplication of effort.

1.3 The Scope of the Study

This study used principally qualitative analysis within a collective case study methodology to investigate these questions. Three HEIs form the basis of the case study. These three institutions are indicative of the range of HE establishments that exist in the United Kingdom (UK) and include a pre-1992 university ('old' university), a post-1992 university ('new' university) and a university college. Although other classifications of HE exist (Altbach, 2002; Carnegie Foundation, 1997-2003; Dupa, 2003; Lang, 2002), this threefold division was used as it is clearly understood by those working in the sector and is in common usage (see for example Coates and Adnett, 2003). In each of the institutions two undergraduate programmes which had been developed collaboratively were studied. The evidence base has been drawn from documentary analysis, questionnaires and stakeholder interviews.

For the purpose of this study the three institutions have been anonymised and are referred to as Old University, New University and University College. Details of the selection of both the universities and the programmes are given in Chapter 4. However, to set the scene, brief pen-portraits are given here.

Old University

Old University describes itself as '*one of the top 10 research-led universities in the UK*'. Its strategic plan centres around three main elements of activity: research, education and enterprise. In this work, it is engaged in partnership work with a wide range of institutions, businesses and organisations. It is a large multi-campus university with about 20,000 students and 5,000 staff located across a city and on a satellite site in a nearby town. It also has a number of host institutions which deliver programmes on its behalf, including a network of FECs and work-based learning locations. It has a broad discipline base but is particularly noted for its science and engineering provision and it has a number of research groups of international importance. In its promotional literature it describes itself as an institution committed to:

- *'The advancement of knowledge through critical and independent scholarship and research of international significance.*
- *The communication of knowledge in an active learning environment involving staff at the forefront of their disciplines.*
- *The application of knowledge for the benefit of society, both directly and by collaboration with other organizations'.*

(web site, accessed 2005)

Two programmes have been selected here as part of the case study: a Foundation Degree in Arts *Working with Children* produced in partnership with a local education authority and three FECs aimed at those people working with young children aged 0-12; and a Diploma of Higher Education *Canine Assistance Studies* produced in conjunction with an assistance dogs' charity to provide a qualification for its Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMIs).

1.3.1 New University

New University is 'new' only in that it gained its university title in 1992 with the removal of the binary divide. It has a history of providing education for over 140 years and has grown in size through both expansion and merger to offer education today to almost 14,000 students. It is a multi-campus university which has a strong outward – looking focus, in part due to its very constrained site within an historic city. In contrast to Old University, its focus is more towards education although it has a growing research reputation particularly in applied and vocational areas. It has set itself the following strategic aims:

'In serving regional, national and international communities, the University will pursue three key aims, so that by 2010 it will be:

- *a premier learning and teaching institution that is student centred;*
- *a research community that equally values research and knowledge transfer;*
- *a responsive higher education partner playing a leading role in the socio-economic development of the region.'*

(Annual Report, 2003)

Its commitment to partnership work is very strong as shown by the quotation above from the Annual Report and by the following extract from its website:

*'In recent years we've been able to provide more students with a [new university] education through partnerships with other education providers in both the region and further afield. To date, [new university] validated undergraduate courses are being offered by **nine** UK partner institutions and **ten** overseas institutions.'*

(Web-site accessed 2005)

Two programmes have been selected: a Foundation Degree in Arts *Early Childhood Education* produced in partnership with a local education authority, one FEC and a private training college aimed at those people

working with young children in schools 4-12 years; and a Higher National Diploma (HND) in *Business* produced in conjunction with two FECs and the Examinations organisation, EdExcel.

1.3.2 University College

University College is one of the largest university colleges in the UK with approximately 13,500 students. It is a Church of England College with a strong community ethos. Its main site is in a historic city but it has three subsidiary campuses within its region. It has a strong vocational focus, in particular providing education and training for the public services.

Partnership work is embedded in its philosophy and it works with many educational and business partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors. This external focus is embodied in its mission statement:

'As an outward-looking University College and a Church of England Foundation, our mission is to provide excellent academic and professional education underpinned by research, scholarship and creative work and by Christian principles and values.'
(Annual Report, 2004, p 2)

Although it is predominantly teaching-led, it has several academic areas which '*meet national and international standards for research*' (Web site, accessed 2005).

Two programmes have been selected here: a Foundation Degree / Bachelor of Arts in *Child and Youth Studies* produced in partnership with a local education authority and a number of FECs aimed at those people working with children; and an Advanced Certificate in *Education (Post Compulsory)* produced in conjunction with seven FECs involved both as deliverers of the programme and as employers of the students.

1.4 The Structure of the Study

The purpose of this first chapter **Rationale and Introduction to the Research** is to set the context of the partnerships for collaborative undergraduate curriculum development. The partnerships involved the awarding body (the HEI), the educational partners and the employers from the public, private or voluntary sectors. These partnerships were responding to policy initiatives from the government particularly around the issues of social inclusion and widening participation in HE, and the modernisation of the workforce in an increasingly competitive world.

The external environment is examined in the first of two literature review chapters. **The Policy Context (Chapter 2)** considers the evolution of policies over the last forty years and how policy is being used to drive further change in the education sector. The HE curriculum and the pressures affecting it are considered in depth in the second part of the literature review: **University Curriculum: Challenge and Change (Chapter 3)**. HE, like any other activity, is affected both from internal pressure and by the external environment and the chapter examines how institutions are reacting to the need for change. One element is considered in detail, the curriculum and its development in partnership, as this is the focus for this research.

The **Methodology (Chapter 4)** explains the choice of methodology - a collective case study and aspects of the research design such as sampling, validity, reliability and ethics. The techniques of data analysis are explained in **The Analysis of the Data (Chapter 5)**. Each element of the research methodology is considered and examined critically with respect to the techniques employed and their relevance to the research questions. Three principal areas of analysis relate to the research questions and these are covered in the next three chapters.

In **Perception of Partnership Benefits (Chapter 6)** issues relating to the first research question are considered in detail through an analysis of the aims. This is then developed into a model of partnership benefits and the possible impact of this model on the willingness of partners to get involved in collaborative curriculum initiatives in future is discussed. The evidence for research question two is presented and discussed in **Barriers to Curriculum Development in Partnership Arrangements (Chapter 7)**. The analysis concentrates on the reported barriers that emerged as the partnerships formed and the development teams undertook their work. The third of the analysis chapters, **Overcoming the Barriers (Chapter 8)**, considers how the process of developing undergraduate curriculum may be facilitated in partnership arrangements by working to overcome the barriers. This chapter relates specifically to how the process of collaborative curriculum development can be facilitated to develop and implement new programmes that meet widening participation and workforce development objectives.

Finally, in **Conclusions and Implications (Chapter 9)** the research questions are discussed in relation to the thesis as a whole. The principal contributions to knowledge are presented and discussed, and a unified model of effective partnership development is presented. The chapter concludes with implications for the practice of partnership for undergraduate curriculum development, some policy implications, and it identifies some areas for future research.

Chapter 2: The Policy Context

2.1 Introduction

The latter part of the twentieth century saw a period of unprecedented change in education at all levels. To understand why collaborative partnerships in curriculum development have increased and why there has been growing external pressure on undergraduate programmes, this study begins by investigating the policy context that has been set by successive governments in recent years. The national educational policy arena is vast and this chapter focuses on two current policy areas of particular relevance (workforce development and widening participation) – as these are key elements of government reform that are impacting on HEIs and both are being tackled through collaboration and partnership.

This chapter reviews the literature in terms of both FE and HE as the sectors are closely interconnected. Partnerships in this research lie at the interface of FE and HE on the one hand, and education and employment on the other. Between the sectors there are both similarities and differences. A chronological approach was adopted to emphasise these similarities and to demonstrate the evolution of policy over time. Differentiation between the sectors also needed to be understood as, despite their different histories, in partnerships FE and HE have to work together. This thesis is a study of collaborative curriculum development operating in a policy context and, in this chapter, this context will be explored.

In April 2003, the Secretary of State for Education, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Director of the CBI hosted a meeting at the Institute of Civil Engineers to launch an initiative to promote effective collaborative partnerships for workforce modernisation. This meeting considered collaboration between the sectors but one element of discussion was how curriculum change could be encouraged to help

achieve economic growth. At this meeting a small-scale survey undertaken by the CBI into collaborative partnerships was presented and one of the factors identified as important for improving collaboration between business and HE was the provision of relevant courses.

'Some universities are clearly seeking to respond to business' requirements for tailored courses. Research by HEFCE shows that in 2000-01, 73% provided short bespoke courses for business on campus and 64% did so on companies' premises. But it is not clear how many businesses are offered this level of customer service. Even within the sample of larger companies we surveyed, 40% said they would be willing to get involved if universities were more prepared to develop well-defined, bespoke courses that add value to the business.'
(CBI, 2003, p5)

The link between the needs of business and HEI programmes is a focus of debate but is also a central plank of the government's desire to make HE more accountable for the use of public funds.

Another of the government's key policies is to promote widening participation through partnerships between education and business to encourage a greater proportion of young people into HE, especially those from traditionally low-participating groups (DfES, 2003b). HE expansion in the 1970s and 1980s began by attracting more students from the affluent classes, already rich in cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997) and more recent research suggests that this is still the case (Foskett and Lumby, 2003). The aim now is to increase the proportion of students from social classes III-V (Metcalf, 1997), those with disabilities, and ethnic minority groups with low participation rates such as Afro-Caribbean males (HEFCE, 1997). Removing barriers to learning requires change on many fronts: student support; advice and guidance; financial support; outreach; admissions and so on, as the barriers reflect embedded social and cultural values. However, a powerful tool for the demolition of the barriers is the curriculum itself. Providing relevant, accessible and flexible courses is a strategy for improving participation rates and it has the added

benefits of contributing to opportunities for workforce development and enhancing learning for all.

'Collaborative Partnership', 'Workforce Development' and 'Widening Participation' are, therefore, part of today's political agenda for HE. To understand why requires an historical perspective. Changes in education over the last four decades help trace the roots of these policies and why they have been such a high priority for successive governments.

2.2 The Evolution of Policy: Gathering Momentum

When considering the way that the curriculum is evolving in universities, it is also necessary to consider the context of schools and FE as it is here that we can find the seeds of policies affecting HE. It is impossible to understand one sector without reference to the others as there are strong direct and indirect links between them. They are interdependent.

Government curriculum reforms began with schools and gradually the other sectors have come into their sights – firstly the FE sector and, more recently, HE. As we shall see, government has increasingly exerted control over the school and FE sectors in terms of the curriculum, funding, management and organisation as exemplified by the setting up of the National Curriculum in the Education Reform Act (1988) or by publishing performance league tables. Government control over HE is less easy to exert directly as the HEIs are autonomous and independent. However, it has indirect influence through the various funding streams particularly through grants from the Funding Councils. It also can exert indirect control through changes in the environment. For example, the introduction of Curriculum 2000 (QCA, 2000) into schools and colleges had a knock-on effect on the content of the curriculum and how it is taught in the universities. As we shall see, government is increasingly using a wide range of influences (financial, socio-cultural, statutory and political) to effect change in the HE sector.

One of the most influential reports on HE in recent years, the Dearing Report, came after three decades of expansion following the Robbins Report of 1963 which had set out a suggested increase from 8 per cent of the school leaving population entering HE to 17 per cent by 1980 (Robbins, 1963). Key elements of this expansion included the formation of the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), in 1964, and the founding of the Open University in 1969, both under the Wilson Government (1964 – 1970). A landmark in the development of modern post-compulsory education occurred in 1976 when the then Prime Minister, James Callaghan delivered his speech *'Towards a national debate'* at Ruskin College, Oxford. In particular, he questioned the specialised and academic nature of the 16-19 curriculum and raised the question of the need for a core curriculum of knowledge. In the speech he identified the goal of education as equipping *'... children to the best of their ability for a lively constructive place in society and to fit them to do a job of work'*. This speech began what was termed 'The Great Debate' which was meant to be a national engagement with the challenges of education. In the end it fizzled out into a few days of discussion groups led by the Department of Education and Science (DES) at regional level (Armitage *et al*, 1999). However, the articulation between education and the world of work had been brought into the political spotlight and the importance of the link between educational relevance and economic growth has been a continuing theme of policy ever since. The Ruskin speech also marked a shift from a period when those involved in education were considered autonomous professionals to a period of greater centralised government intervention.

This focus on vocationalism was to be developed significantly by the Thatcher governments of the 1980s. The political and economic background involved attempts by the government to control inflation and to wrest the power from the Trade Unions which had had such an influence on the British economy, epitomised by the 1984 miners' strike. Monetarist policies were introduced and the privatisation of both industry and local government changed the economic and political landscapes. In

the early 1980s unemployment rose sharply. Manufacturing jobs were being lost at an alarming rate and much of this loss was concentrated in the urban areas. It is not surprising that the emphasis in education was on producing young people who could make a valuable contribution to the country's economic recovery.

A series of vocationally-led initiatives followed, led by a number of quasi-autonomous, non-governmental organisations (quangos) such as the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and the Further Education Unit (FEU), which were set up specifically to deliver change in education and training. In 1979, *A Basis for Choice* (FEU, 1979) reiterated the need for a common core curriculum to provide young people with the transferable skills they needed for work which would be gained through a skills-focused curriculum. The focus and discourse in education at this time changed to one of providing training, exemplified by the publication of *A New Training Initiative: A Consultative Document* in 1981 (MSC, 1981) and later in the same year *A New Training Initiative: An Agenda for Action* (MSU, 1981). These reports set out the skills training agenda for both young people and adults. Curriculum changes in FE followed rapidly including, in 1982, proposals for the Certificate for Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) for students who were still undecided about their career direction (JBPVE, 1984) and, in 1983, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (MSC, 1987).

This focus on vocational development and a culture based on enterprise began to have an impact on HE. While universities had always received funding through partnerships with industry in research and development activity, the influence was now reaching the curriculum and having an impact on the knowledge base. In 1987, the government launched the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative (EHEI). The budget (£100 million) was to be used to raise the profile of enterprise and to provide everyone with the '*competencies and aptitudes*' they needed to take part in the enterprise culture. This funding encouraged some HEIs to work with businesses to develop programmes (for example Jones and Harris,

1995) but the number of programmes was small. However, they were the forerunners of the collaborative programmes being researched here.

Towards the end of the 1980s the Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker, signalled, in a speech at Lancaster University (1989), the importance of increasing the number of people in HE to increase the economic competitiveness of the UK and to encourage economic growth. He called for the doubling of student numbers (to 30%). This clarion call of increased participation has been repeated throughout the 1990s and to the present day.

2.3 Driving the Change Agenda

In the 1990s, education initiatives came thick and fast. The trend for successive governments to stress skills and training continued. Most noteworthy were the attempts to remove the divide in FE between the academic and vocational qualifications. In 1990, *'Core Skills 16-19'* was published by the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1990). It proposed developing six core skills: communication; problem solving; personal skills; numeracy; information technology; and competence in a modern language. The first three were to be developed in all post-16 programmes. In 1991, the White Paper *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (DES, 1991) called for parity of status between academic and vocational qualifications and the government introduced General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in 1992 which later became Advanced GNVQs and then evolved into Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCEs). These vocational qualifications were to be studied predominantly in college rather than in the workplace and, as level 3 qualifications, they were to be *'equivalent in standard'* to A-levels in terms of university entrance criteria (DES, 1991). By stressing skills, particularly work-related skills, these qualifications would have an impact on teaching in the HEIs that recruited these students.

In 1993, Sir Ron Dearing produced the first of three major reports which were to have a significant impact on the education sector. His first Report, *The National Curriculum and its Assessment* was a response to industrial unrest by teachers due to the huge administrative and assessment burden of the National Curriculum and the criticism of its narrowness (Dearing, 1993). In this report he made significant changes, reducing the number of attainment targets and the time that needed to be spent on the National Curriculum and increasing the breadth at Key Stage 4 by introducing a vocational option. His second report, *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 year olds*, was fairly conservative and did not recommend, as expected, a unified system of qualifications to replace NVQs, GNVQs and A-levels (Dearing, 1996). Vocationalism was still a theme and he recommended the incorporation of key skills into all tertiary qualifications. The report re-launched youth training schemes and introduced Modern Apprenticeships (Fuller and Unwin, 2003), and the National Record of Achievement to assist students to prepare a statement of their achievement ready for future education and work. These ideas can be seen to be the forerunners of changes in HE including the move to involve employers in developing a needs-led curriculum and the introduction of Personal Development Plans (PDPs). Dearing's third report, *Higher Education in the Learning Society*, reported the outcomes of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing, 1997). This proposed a number of significant changes to HE and will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

The enterprise theme continued to be important in the 1990s. For example, in 1991 the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) were developed to identify gaps in local skills and to organise training to meet these needs. The TECs were disbanded in 2001 with the development of the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) which took over many of their functions. A major change in both sectors occurred as a result of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (HMSO, 1992) which signalled the end of the binary divide and allowed polytechnics to choose to become universities in 1993. The Council for National Academic Awards

(CNAAs) was abolished and separate funding councils were set up for FE (the Further Education Funding Council) and HE (the Higher Education Funding Council). Incorporation of FECs occurred as a result in 1993 with the removal of Local Education Authority control and the colleges became independent businesses within a competitive environment. As we shall see later, the introduction of a competitive environment was to impact on the ability of organisations and individuals to collaborate when the policy shifted under New Labour.

The Conservative Governments under John Major, 1990 -1997, continued to push for training to help businesses attain and maintain their position. The White Paper, *Competitiveness: Helping Business Win* (DTI, 1994) set out to describe how the nation could become more competitive. The trend for education to be the servant of business and industry was epitomised by the merging of the government departments that looked after these areas into the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in 1995 and the publishing of *Competitiveness: Forging Ahead: Education and Training* (DoE/ DfE, 1995). This stress on the instrumental role of education to provide a well-educated labour force that is prepared for the world of work, evident in these documents, is a theme that continues to the present day.

The theme of lifelong learning dominated the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (set up in 1996) and it became an underpinning principle of education in the years at the turn of the century. Politically, the mood was changing and Tony Blair's New Labour was in the ascendancy. In his famous speech to the Labour Party Conference in October 1996, Blair said: '*Ask me my three main priorities for Government, and I will tell you: education, education and education...*' (Blair, 1996). Education, indeed, has been a major focus for change since Blair was elected in 1997 although perhaps not with the aspiration and hope many perceived in this statement (see for example, Labour Party, 1997; Fielding, 2001; Walford, 2005).

Social policy in education has focused increasingly on access of the individual to post-compulsory education and this has provided the roots of the drive for a more socially inclusive HE sector. A number of landmark reports have directed this trend. In 1996, the FEFC published the Tomlinson Report on *Inclusive Learning* (FEFC, 1996). This reported the first national inquiry in England into FE provision for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and it recommended a closer match between the learning needs of students and education provision. The report emphasised creating an appropriate learning environment for students, and recommendations included providing each student with an individually-designed learning environment and adequate and appropriate learning resources. Although the report focused on the needs of students with learning difficulties, it was widely recognised that what is good practice for these students, is good for **all** students. The recommendations focussed on the development of a more inclusive FE sector and it was suggested that any review of funding methodology should promote both inclusive learning and widening participation.

This issue of inclusion was followed through in the Kennedy Report *Learning Works* (FEFC, 1997). The terms of reference were to advise on the nature of under-participation in FE and to make recommendations on how participation might be increased and improved. Although aimed at FE, much of the content was equally relevant to HE and the thinking paved the way for widening participation (WP) development here too. The Kennedy Report identified the disparity between resource levels for students in FECs compared to HEIs: FE caters for 75% of the students with only 25% of the funding. The Report also pointed out the social *exclusivity* of HE where *'sixty-four per cent of university students come from social classes 1 and 2. One per cent come from social class 5'* (FEFC, 1997).

The recommendations in the Kennedy Report encouraged FE to become a more inclusive service. It stressed that access to education and learning is vital for providing society with a basis for economic prosperity

and social cohesion. The report also suggested that widening access in FE is the key to unlocking the potential of learners. The competitiveness of the post-incorporation environment was praised for its effect of introducing greater responsiveness to learners' needs in the sector but was criticised for the wasteful duplication and lack of strategic planning at a local level. The report argued that progress towards a more responsive service required local stakeholders to agree strategic priorities and to work in collaborative partnerships to deliver greater opportunities for disadvantaged groups (FEFC, 1997). These problems of duplication and poor strategic planning still beset the sector and addressing them was an important element of the Local Area Reviews of provision in 2004. Much of the thinking seen in this research was present in the Kennedy Report such as the desire for education to form collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders to produce more relevant learning opportunities.

The Kennedy Report was followed closely by the delayed report from the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing 1997). This Report was considered by those in government to be the most comprehensive review of HE since the Robbins Report in the 1960s. The conclusions of the report were cautious and un-ambitious – though numerous: 93 in total. This caution reflected both the membership of the Committee (dominated as it was by those from 'old' universities and large corporations), and the fact that there was a change of government, which altered the Report's emphasis at a late stage. For example, inclusion and teaching and learning issues were not attended to until March 1997 when it became apparent that a change of government was inevitable (Robertson, 1997). The Report took a very traditional view of HE although it did describe the greater variety of provision that now prevails. This lack of ambition is commented on in the literature. For example, in an interesting critique of the Report and its relationship to the 805 consultation responses, Bill (1998) concludes:

'The Report's recommendations as a whole lack force and understanding of which 'levers' have to be moved. All in all, the

Report makes some useful noises, but the analysis and recommendations on aims and role and on lifelong learning and a learning society are disappointing, tend to reinforce the full-time traditional starting point, and do not envisage the extent of cultural change which is needed.'

(Bill, 1998, p294)

The use in the Dearing Report of the concept of *'the learning society'* reflected some of the trends identified here and applied to HE some of the principles already established in FE (Dearing, 1997). The aim of HE, according to the Dearing Report is:

'...to sustain a learning society. The four main purposes which make up this aim are:

- *to inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential levels throughout life, so that they grow intellectually, are well equipped for work, can contribute effectively to society and achieve personal fulfilment;*
- *to increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and to foster their application to the benefit of the economy and society;*
- *to serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy at local, regional and national levels;*
- *to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society.'*

(Dearing, 1997, p13)

Important concepts which underpin current policy are found in this definition such as the purpose of training graduates for a place in the labour market and the need for greater social inclusion. The reforms reflected the changes that had already been applied to schools and FE by successive Conservative governments and it became clear how HE could be affected. Some of the recommendations considered the nature of the HE expansion and recognised that for government to increase the numbers, there would need to be an increase in programmes. At undergraduate level much of the increase in provision would be at *'sub-degree'* (Dearing, 1997, p 14) level and it recommended a phased removal of the cap on full-time undergraduate places over two to three years and an immediate removal of the cap on sub-degree places. This recommendation (recommendation 1) was important both in terms of

widening participation and lifelong learning and funding bodies were encouraged to give priority to institutions that could demonstrate a commitment to WP (recommendation 2) (Dearing, 1997, p 14).

The issues raised by the Tomlinson Report (FEFC, 1996) with respect to inclusive learning are also included in the Dearing Report's section on learning and teaching. Recommendation 8 suggested that:

'...all institutions of higher education give high priority to developing and implementing learning and teaching strategies which focus on the promotion of students' learning.'
(Dearing, 1997, p43)

Curriculum was also examined. The report recognised the value of the single honours degree and the part it plays in developing specialism but it also suggested the need for a greater variety of programmes. Dearing reinforced the need for key skills' development and supported their inclusion in HE programmes. Vocationalism was signalled as an area for development in HE. Recommendation 18, for example, encouraged:

'...institutions to identify opportunities to increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help them reflect on such experience.'
(Dearing, 1997, p44)

One of the main recommendations (recommendation 21) was that all institutions should develop programme specifications which set out clearly the intended learning outcomes, assessment and the levels of awards that could be achieved (Dearing, 1997, p16). This recommendation alone had a massive impact on HEIs in requiring programmes to be reviewed and in many cases revalidated, and the attendant quality assurance (QA) requirements were a major feature of the sector from 1997 onwards. Dearing also set out a qualifications framework that aimed to bring clarity to the confusion of possible awards and help students map their progression. Each subject was required to

work towards producing a benchmark statement and institutions were required to comply in their curricula. Of particular pertinence for this research, Dearing believed that collaborative partnerships were one mechanism for achieving some of these aims. Links between HE and business were to be encouraged and he believed that the responsibility for developing these lay both with business (recommendation 30, p 46) and with HE (recommendation 40, p 47) (Dearing, 1997).

2.4 The Developing Education Marketplace

One of the most controversial parts of the Dearing Report was the section on student finance and how it paved the way for the introduction of student fees covering *'around 25 per cent of the average cost of higher education tuition, through an income contingent mechanism...'* (recommendation 79, p35). Soon after the Report's publication, the government announced the abolition of student grants and the introduction of fees of up to £1000 per year. The Secretary of State received the power to do this through the 1998 Teacher and Higher Education Act (HMSO, 1998), which set the framework for much greater interference in the system by the government. This is of particular relevance to this research as it shifted the role of the student from receiver of education to that of consumer. In a consumer society, HE becomes a service that must satisfy its customers who, it is assumed, will demand more relevant programmes.

Market forces began to come more into play in both the perception and the reality of the service. However, HE is a quasi-market (Le Grand, 1990) rather than part of the free market because:

- the suppliers of the service are mostly 'not-for profit' organisations;
- the state plays a part in controlling what is offered by constraining funding and student numbers;

- the exchange mechanisms involve a third party (central funding bodies), although this is reduced as the direct element of fees is raised;
- public sector organisations are constrained from acting as businesses for example through constraints on their borrowing.

(Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001)

However, the HE sector does have the three essential elements of a market, identified by Scott (1996, p24) as: '*a diversity of providers; a plurality of customers; and a means of exchange*'. The '*means of exchange*' is perhaps the most problematical, but in the past the exchange value has been based on qualifications and the wealth required to support a student through additional full time study. With the introduction of fees, exchange becomes much more overt and students act more like customers who can wield the power of choice (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). The application of market theory to public services has become a feature of many developed economies based on beliefs such as increased efficiency, the benefits of competition and value for money (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). Although marketisation has usually been initiated by right wing governments, the ideas have tended to persist even with a major shift in political power as exemplified by the increase in student fees by Labour in the 2004 Higher Education Act (HMSO, 2004) which will take effect in 2006.

There is growing recognition of the complexity of the idea of an education market in the literature (Ball, 1993; Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Scott, 1996; Foskett and Hesketh, 1997; Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). Increasingly, education markets are seen to operate at the local or micro-level (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001). Clearly, one difference between HE and other sectors is that there are national and international marketplaces, as well as local ones. Also the national scene is highly segmented: for example the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University are not trading in the same marketplace despite being close

neighbours geographically; the former being a global research-intensive university and the latter having primarily a teaching mission delivered through a dispersed campus.

The notion of the market varies between institutions depending on their philosophy. Maringe and Foskett (2002) refer to the five basic philosophical perspectives of marketing, based on the work of Armstrong and Kotler (2000):

- *The product view* in which the university produces courses that it believes meet students' needs;
- *The production view* in which universities have to increase production and reduce costs to keep pace with demand;
- *The selling view* in which universities must market their courses aggressively in order to gain or keep market share;
- *The marketing view* in which universities put their customers first and provide for their needs and preferences;
- *The societal marketing view* in which the ethics of business conduct overcomes all other pressures so that the needs of society and public accountability are put first (Bush in Lumby and Foskett, 1999). Scott (1989, p17) sees this as requiring universities to develop 'a capacity to be open to outside impulses and new ideas', a view which certainly strikes a chord with the ideas of collaborative curriculum development in this research.

However, markets can also act to constrain collaboration as they are inherently competitive, and the FE/HE interface considered in this research is the nexus of competition between FECs; between HEIs; and between FECs and HEIs. For example, the higher education markets that FECs would like to get into (the sub-degree undergraduate programmes) are in the very arena where WP policies are demanding collaboration, and both FECs and HEIs think that they could provide these programmes more cheaply and more efficiently on their own. Such an environment of

competition distorts the ability of institutions to collaborate and can impact on trust as we shall see later in this study.

The influence of the HE marketplace is beginning to escalate as the nature of local, national and global markets change and this will impact on the student experience including on the nature of the curriculum. As we shall see in Chapter 3, globalisation affects what is taught. Students in future will have a much greater arena of choice and information technology will enable them to access information about a wide range of programmes. League tables will influence choice (Bush, in Lumby and Foskett, 1999) and students will take these rankings into account before committing their money to fees. Globalisation of the HE market is increased by credit transfer schemes and the international equivalence of qualifications. An example is the Bologna Declaration (1999) which committed the signatory states to promoting a more globally competitive European HE system. All these factors emphasise how marketisation is a key issue in this research.

2.5 Changes Post-Dearing

From the Dearing Report until the present day, HE has stayed in the political reforming spotlight. The Dearing Report had much less impact than was originally envisaged (Ryan, 2005), although the full impact of reforms such as raising student fees and possible deregulation in 2010 has yet to be seen. In November 1997, the Fryer Report *Learning for the Twenty-First Century* was published (Fryer, 1997). This brought together much of the thinking on lifelong learning that had occurred since the publication of the Report of the Commission on Social Justice in 1994 (CSJ, 1994). It encompassed the themes important in this research in its ten point agenda such as Widening Participation and Achievement (chapter 3) and Partnerships, Planning and Collaboration (chapter 6) (Fryer, 1997).

Widening participation was seen as an essential requirement for reducing social exclusion and encouraging a culture of lifelong learning in Britain. The report stressed the importance of getting a higher proportion of the population to the starting line for learning and ensuring that the barriers to learning were removed to enable progression. Workplace learning was identified as one of the areas for development and included the provision for people to up-date their skills. The report went on to suggest that employers should provide modern apprenticeships and employee development schemes; TECs '*should offer support through improved needs and labour market analysis and the provision of focussed programmes of learning*' (Fryer, 1997, para 1.16); and the University for Industry (Ufi) should assist by identifying learning gaps, brokering learning partnerships and using new technology to take learning to the learners. Fryer stressed the importance of collaboration in making these changes and, although HE wasn't specified, the report recommended the development of strategic partnerships of stakeholders at regional and local level (paragraph 1.21).

The Government published its Green Paper on lifelong learning in the following year. *The Learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain* (DfEE, 1998) promised to develop mechanisms for bringing learning into homes and workplaces. The Secretary of State, David Blunkett, identified six key principles, including sharing responsibility with employers, employees and the community, and working together as the key to success, which specifically relates to this research. The Labour government then launched a number of initiatives in support of its policy of lifelong learning. The University for Industry (Ufi) was established, local Lifelong Partnerships were endorsed and local advice and guidance services were set up. Learning was to reach all sectors of the community by using the power of electronic communications such as the Learning Direct service established in 1999 and it was to be supported by targeted funding initiatives such as Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) which allowed people to set up their own learning fund with government support. These initiatives would also tackle social exclusion (Fryer, 1997) on many fronts

and would **create** a market, not just respond to it. Many of these initiatives had a short-term impact and some, such as ILAs, failed to survive. Learning Direct was re-branded to become Learn Direct and continues to offer courses through local centres and the Internet. As Taylor has observed, the policies of New Labour on lifelong learning have achieved '*predictable but modest advance*' and without more radical social reform there will be no '*major change*' (Taylor, 2005, p114).

One of the main areas of activity for New Labour was to increase people's access to learning and skills development. In a speech at the London School of Economics in 1999, David Blunkett attacked the old view of the welfare state (Blunkett, 1999). He indicated that there would be an expectation that those signing on for the jobseekers allowance would need evidence on their curriculum vitae that would help them gain employment, for example some recent qualification or training. The speech was made to the LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion which published on the same day a research review that showed the link between educational attainment and social exclusion (Sparkes, 1999). WP through development of a skills agenda for education was born and closer links between FE and HE became inevitable as evidenced by publications such as *Widening Participation Partnerships with HE* (FEFC, 1999).

Over the next two years a number of educational reforms signalled the political importance of this move. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), set up to replace the work of the FEFC and the TECs in April 2001, was made responsible for all post-16 education and training (except HE) and it works with a range of stakeholders to meet the needs set out in the Government White Paper *Learning to Succeed* (DfEE, 2000a). In HE the National Learning Targets specified a number of objectives in addition to the widely reported 50% participation rate for those under 30 years of age. HEIs were to move towards widening the social mix to be more representative, to progress towards fairer access, to reduce non-completion rates and to increase research and teaching excellence.

Since 2002/3 HEFCE has adopted a funding model which diverts funding towards institutions meeting their targets on these political objectives (Coates and Adnett, 2003).

The National Skills Task Force (NSTF), set up in 1998 to develop a National Skills Agenda, submitted its Report, *Skills for All*, (NSTF, 2000) and the Secretary of State's response, *Opportunity for All: skills for the new economy*, was published in 2000 (DfEE, 2000c). The aim was to ensure that Britain had the skills it needed to '*sustain high levels of employment, compete effectively in the global market place and provide opportunity for all*' (DfEE, 2001, p 4). In his statement, *Opportunity and Skills in the Knowledge-Driven Economy*, Blunkett identified how the government would seek to build on the work of the NSTF and he paid tribute to the collaboration between education and business in drawing up the agenda (DfEE, 2001). Although many of the recommendations were aimed at schools and FE, changes in HE were also implied. The vision was '*... of a society where high skills, high rewards and access to education and training are open to everyone*' (DfEE, 2001, p 6). In this vision it was clear that WP was a key part of the strategy. One of the main priorities in the report was to:

'...open up a ladder of vocational opportunity for young people, offering parity of esteem with more academic study and progression to higher education.'
(DfEE, 2001, p6)

This was spelt out later in the report where the development of '*new vocational foundation degrees*' (DfEE, 2001, p 6) was seen as the natural development of a vocational qualifications framework which began with vocational GCSEs (introduced in 2002), through vocational A levels (AVCEs, introduced in 2000) and on to foundation degrees (introduced 2000).

The 2001 document stressed the importance of workforce development, which was to be achieved by the DfEE, working with the LSC, the

Regional Development Agency and the National Training Organisations, to ensure a strategic approach to skills development. It also advocated further development of the Modern Apprenticeship and Graduate Apprenticeship schemes. HE was seen as an integral part of this vocational ladder and the need for greater links between HEIs and business received special mention.

'To complete our new vocational ladder of opportunity, I am committed to the modernisation of our higher education system. Many of our universities are already the envy of the world, But not enough are building the kind of bridges between the campus and employers, which could substantially improve on our levels of workforce skills, productivity and innovation.'
(DfEE, 2001, p10)

The Secretary of State went on to indicate that further action would be taken *'to ensure that higher education continues to deliver on our vision'* (DfEE, 2001, p11). He identified a number of ways in which this would be done through: further widening of access; the development of new and flexible ways of learning; the promotion of collaborative partnerships between HEIs, FECs and business, and it is this that provides the context for this research.

Foundation degrees, launched in September 2001, were an important part of this strategy for a more vocationally relevant and accessible HE curriculum and a replacement for HNDs. They were a new qualification, designed with employers, as a means of *'upskilling their current employees and meeting their needs for skilled, work ready personnel'* (DfES, 2002, p 1). They are an example of government-led curriculum change and they represented a major step towards the intention that HE should play its part in delivering government policy. Foundation degrees are intermediate qualifications addressing the skills gap at higher technician and associate professional level and they provide progression to honours degrees and further professional qualifications. The government saw the purpose of foundation degrees as being to:

'equip students with the combination of technical skills, academic knowledge and transferable skills demanded by employers...'
(Source: HEFCE, 2000)

It can be seen from the list of essential features (Figure 2.1) that foundation degrees encompass the elements of access, employment relevance and skills which were such a feature of educational change from the mid-1990s onwards. The government supported this initiative by allocating additional development funding for pilot foundation degrees and opportunities for institutions to bid for Additional Student Numbers (ASNs).

Foundation degrees achieved some success according to the early evaluations (DfES, 2004), although research conducted in the West Midlands suggests that information about foundation degrees has not penetrated into the consciousness of employers (Smith *et al*, 2005). In 2005 there were about 24,000 students who had graduated from, or were studying on, foundation degrees and over 800 different programmes (Foundation Degree Forward, 2005). The quality of the courses is monitored by the QAA against the Foundation Degree benchmark and the early inspections undertaken in 2003 showed that the QAA had confidence in 30 of the 33 programmes inspected (DfES, 2004). One of the main difficulties faced by those setting up foundation degrees was securing employer involvement. For example in a study of 14 foundation degrees undertaken for AimHigher in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, only one programme reported employer involvement in the curriculum design (Kirk and Buck, 2005). Engaging employers was easier in sectors with large workforces and in the public sector. The DfES has identified this as one of the main challenges still to be worked on and has recommended that employer involvement should be driven by awareness-raising activities through the Sector Skills Councils and by Government and public sector employers acting *'as exemplars for the contribution which Foundation Degrees make to recruitment and workforce development'* (DfES, 2004, p9). The successes and benefits of

Figure 2.1 Essential features of the foundation degree

(HEFCE, 2000)

Employer Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the design and regular review of programmes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve recognition from employer and professional bodies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With both local organisations and national sectoral bodies, to establish demand for foundation degree programmes
The development of skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical and work specific skills, relevant to the sector
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underpinned by rigorous and broad-based academic learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key skills in communication, team working, problem solving, application of number, use of IT and improving own learning and performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic skills, for instance, reasoning and work process management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be recorded by transcript, validated by the awarding HEI and underpinned by a personal development plan
Application of skills in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must demonstrate their skills in work relevant to the area of study
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience should be sufficient to develop understanding of the world of work and be validated, assessed and recorded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The awarding HEIs should award credits, with exemptions for students with relevant work experience
Credit accumulation and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation degrees will attract a minimum of 240 credits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual consortia should agree and apply CAT arrangements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual consortia should recognise appropriate prior and work-based learning through the award of credits
Progression – within work and/or to an honours degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be guaranteed articulation arrangements with at least one honours degree
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes must clearly state subsequent arrangements for progression to honours degrees and to professional qualifications or higher level NVQs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those students wishing to progress to the honours degree, the time taken should not normally exceed 1.3 years for a FTE student

foundation degrees are considered in detail later in this study. However, evidence from research conducted in Glamorgan suggests that the student profile on foundation degrees is more weighted towards older age groups i.e. those over 30 years (Morgan *et al*, 2004). This is borne out by

the three programmes in this research and, if it is a pattern that continues, foundation degrees will not have the desired impact on the government target of 50% participation of those under 30 years of age by 2010 (DfES, 2003a).

Governments are major investors in HE and want to see that the taxpayer gets value-for-money. As has been shown here, there has been an escalation of government influence on HE and an (as yet unarticulated) aim to ensure that it does the government's bidding in a similar way to schools and FE. There has been increased emphasis on HE developing more relevant curricula, based on the perceived needs of employers and the State. This was encompassed in the White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003a) in which partnership between HE and business was emphasised.

The development of collaborative partnerships between HE, FE and business to develop and deliver a more relevant curriculum has been a theme of government policy since New Labour came to power in 1997. Lumby and Foskett (2005, p 134-6) identified four key drivers for such partnership: the involvement of a greater range of stakeholders in education provision, leading to increasing accountability; the adoption of market values to drive down costs; the widening of the knowledge base and increasing students' access to it; and combating '*organisational fragmentation*' (Glatter, 2003, p17) of the increasingly complex education service.

Partnership and collaboration are also relevant in WP (Doyle, 2001; Stuart, 2002). The 2003 report from the Department for Education and Skills *Widening Participation in Higher Education* identified four conditions that must be met if a capable student is to embark on an appropriate course:

- **attainment** – gaining qualifications, either academic or vocational, that demonstrate achievement and give a guide to potential;

- **aspiration** – having the desire to enter HE and being encouraged by parents, friends and teachers, as well as universities themselves, to do so;
- **application** – knowing enough about the alternatives to put in an application which can satisfy their aspirations, and for which they have the appropriate qualifications and qualities;
- **admission** – having achievement, potential and personal qualities recognised through prior attainment and in a number of other ways, and beginning a course which the student is capable of completing. (DfES, 2003b, p5)

The report recognises that the courses provided for these students need to be flexible and accessible and to meet the students' needs. It is possible that students will begin to wield their consumerist-muscle more as fees rise and the market may begin to dictate what HE needs to provide. Students already pay a high price for their HE both directly, through fees, and indirectly, in terms of time lost in employment, and this is due to grow with the introduction of significantly increased fees (capped, for the time-being, at £3000) in 2006 and the possible deregulation of fees in 2010. The sector will need to be able to convince potential students, in the face of rising fees, that their investment continues to make sense. Widen access to HE and expansion of student numbers have been linked but as Mayhew *et al* (2004) have pointed out increasing numbers from lower socio-economic groups may mean that there is differentiation within the system with these students filling places in lower status institutions and courses. Mayhew *et al* question whether by attending HE such students will really have improved their job prospects or potential lifetime earnings. Time will tell.

In summary, the scene has been set and the Government has made its intentions known (if not entirely specifically) to widen participation and to develop the workforce. The forces for change, which have been traced above, are beginning to impact on the way HE works, what partners it

works with and what programmes it provides. Some of the new programmes are addressing overtly issues such as widening participation and workforce modernisation. HEIs are working with partners to provide more relevant and work-focused programmes addressing the skills agenda. The development of partnerships to undertake this work has been complex and some partnerships have been more successful than others. It is a central feature of this research to identify the factors promoting successful partnership working in curriculum development at undergraduate level.

Chapter 3 University Curriculum: Challenge and Change

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter the evolution of government policy on HE and the strategies introduced to effect change over the next ten years were outlined. Several decades of policy proliferation have buffeted the sector and the signs are that the pace of reform is likely to continue to increase. So, how are universities responding to these changes and how is the undergraduate curriculum being modified as a result?

This chapter will consider the background to the undergraduate curriculum and the trends and challenges found therein in the context of collaborative curriculum development. Firstly, the nature and purpose of HE will be considered; in particular the factors affecting *where* and *how* programmes are studied. It then looks at the nature of curriculum in general, the ideologies and conceptual models framing it, and the undergraduate curriculum in particular. This research is concerned principally with partnerships and the final section will consider the nature of collaboration and the operation of existing partnerships between HE and external agencies.

3.2 The Nature of Higher Education at the Start of the 21st Century

Defining what is meant by HE is not simple. It covers a range of institutions variously called universities, institutes and colleges. In 1826 John Henry Newman referred to the creation of academic institutions as *bazaar* or *pantehnicon* i.e. a market place where a whole range of goods are on offer (Newman, 1959). It is interesting that recent changes have moved HEIs much closer to this notion of engaging in a market and contributing to the knowledge economy (OED, 1989, online). A university can be defined as:

'The whole body of teachers and scholars engaged, at a particular place, in giving and receiving instruction in the higher education of learning: such persons associated together as a society or a corporate body with definite organisation and acknowledged powers and privileges (especially that of conferring degrees) and forming an institution for the promotion of education in the higher or more important branches of learning and the colleges, buildings etc, belonging to such a body.'
(OED, 1989, online)

Numerous authors have discussed the definition and purpose of universities (for example Sutherland, 1994; King, 1995; Barratt, 1998; Barnett, 1998; Barnett, 2000; Brown, 2004). There is no single criterion but there are a number of characteristics which help in their recognition. Firstly, they have the power to award degrees granted by charter or Act of Parliament (Sutherland, 1994). They offer a mix of academic subjects and vocational programmes (traditionally in law, medicine and theology but now in a whole host of work-related courses). Internally, there is a notion of academic freedom to test and criticise ideas and to generate new knowledge. Academic standards, content and acceptability of programmes, and the quality of research are all maintained by the academic community (Sutherland, 1994). These characteristics are now being challenged by government, industry and society as a whole and this is one of the key elements of change in the sector (Webber, 2000).

The sector is diverse and is much broader than the inclusion of the universities alone. In the UK there are 130 HEIs and 44 specialist colleges (HEFCE, 2005). They range in size from the Open University with over 158,000 mainly part-time and distance-learning students, to small specialist colleges such as the Dartington College of Arts which has about 460 students (HEFCE, 2005). The terminology is confusing: there are universities, institutes and colleges. The universities are further classified, unofficially but commonly, as 'old' universities (those existing as universities before the removal of the binary divide in 1992) and 'new' universities (those existing as polytechnics and institutes/ colleges of HE before 1992). The 'old' universities are a diverse group in themselves containing ancient collegiate universities (e.g. the University of Oxford);

the 'civic' or 'redbrick' universities built in the 19th and early 20th centuries, (e.g. the University of Liverpool); and the new 'old' universities, (e.g. the University of Sussex) established in the 1950s and 1960s. Nearly all are self-governing, independent and funded by the HE Funding Councils. Within this classification there are various unofficial groupings such as the elite group of 19 research intensive universities known as the 'Russell Group' (www.russellgroup.ac.uk/, accessed 21 April 2005). There is just one entirely privately funded university in the UK (the University of Buckingham). The college sector is equally diverse including as it does university colleges able to confer their own undergraduate degrees, colleges of higher education, specialist colleges and colleges of further and higher education (HEFCE, 2005).

The sector has undergone major structural changes over the past 30 years. Let's begin by looking at how this has affected the student experience.

Students 30 years ago, entering a university, were part of an elite group (the top 5% of the ability range). They had managed to pass the barrier of achieving good A level grades mainly in academic subjects (the product of a curriculum which owed as much to the notions of 'being educated' in the Victorian era as to the needs of the modern world). They would share the experience of being a student with others of largely the same age (young), background (middle or upper class) and school experience (whether that was in a grammar or independent school). As a group, they would live together, study together and play together, and although finances would be very tight, they would be supported through their studies by a grant system. Most would be studying full-time during three discrete terms (as few as 24 teaching weeks per year at some institutions). The courses they would follow would mainly last for three years and be based on clearly defined disciplines and taught through traditional teaching methods such as lectures, tutorials, practical classes and seminars. Afterwards students would either continue with post-graduate study or enter the labour market through business or

professional routes. Their expectation would be that this experience would be rewarded by a lifetime of higher earnings and professional recognition.

Clearly this description is an exaggerated generalisation – but nevertheless recognisable as the experience students of the time had of university life. Almost every aspect of this scenario has changed.

Students now enter HE with a range of qualifications and experience. The 16-19 curriculum has changed and become broader with students studying academic and vocational qualifications in a common framework through Curriculum 2000. Mature students who enter may have traditional qualifications, may have prepared themselves through an Access course or approved 'Return to Study' course or may be without formal qualifications but have demonstrated a readiness to study through a portfolio of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). The heterogeneity of entry qualifications is matched by an increasingly diverse curriculum including a range of vocational programmes at degree and sub-degree level. The mass HE market is diverse with students of varied ages, backgrounds, social context, ethnicity and experiences who will be studying full or part time, on or off campus, on programmes of varying lengths available all year round. The expectation in an age of rapid economic change is that students will return to study again and again, as lifelong learners, as their learning needs change through life (Fryer, 1997).

Many students will not experience HE as residents of the institution. They may live at home or off-campus and most will be in employment to sustain themselves and, possibly, their families. Courses have become more flexible to cope with this additional demand on students' time and increasingly the means to 'earn and learn' has been built into the programmes (HEFCE, 2000). The teaching and learning methods will still include lectures, seminars and practical classes but this is supplemented by enhanced access to learning resources via ICT. When students today complete their studies they may or may not find employment in a

'graduate' profession and will know that there is no longer a culture of a 'job for life'. They will hope that the investment they have made will bring a financial return (indeed the Government's reply to the consultation on its 2003 White Paper on Higher Education reiterates its view that graduates earn on average 50% more than non-graduates over a working lifetime) but the reality is that most leave with significant post-graduation debt. What a change in 30 years.

3.3 Purposes of HE

The HE system has expanded significantly over the last 30-40 years to become a mass, rather than elite, system (Trow, 1987; Trow, 1998; Barnett, 1994; Ford et al, 1996). In post- Second World War Britain there were just 16 recognised institutions catering for 28000 full time students. In academic year 2004/5 there were over 2.2 million students on programmes leading to HE qualifications and credit (10% of whom were studying in colleges of FE) (HEFCE, 2005).

The debate still surfaces from time to time about the purpose of HE. Indeed in 2003, the Secretary of State for Education, Charles Clarke, had to clarify a statement he made regarding its nature (quoted in Woodward and Smithers, 2003). He stated that courses of academic study such as 'medieval history' which are followed for their own sake are 'ornamental' and a waste of public money. He went on to say that publicly funded courses should be able to demonstrate 'clear usefulness'. A spokesman for the Department for Education and Skills had to explain: *'The Secretary of State was basically getting at the fact that universities exist to enable the British economy and society to deal with the challenges posed by the increasingly rapid process of global change.'* (quoted in Woodward and Smithers, 2003). However, economic usefulness is only one purpose of the curriculum and other purposes such as development of the individual and society, it has been argued, are equally important (White 2004). This

debate about purpose and usefulness is one with which the nature of the curriculum is bound fundamentally.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) states the purpose of HE is:

- *'to enable people to develop their capabilities and fulfil their potential, both personally and at work*
- *to advance knowledge and understanding through scholarship and research*
- *to contribute to an economically successful and culturally diverse nation.'*

(HEFCE, 2005, p2)

The business of HE is research and teaching. Both activities are part of the prime mission of *'the creation and dissemination of knowledge'* (Short, 2002, p139). Duderstadt elaborates this further:

'Society believes in and supports the fundamental university missions of teaching and research. It entrusts to these institutions its children and its future. Our universities exist to be repositories, transmitters, and creators of human heritage. They serve as guardians and creators of that knowledge.'

(Duderstadt, 2000, p8-9)

The tension between the competing purposes of HE focuses around whether the prime purpose is to provide a liberal education and pursuit of scholarship for its own sake, or whether it should satisfy the needs of the economy for knowledge and skilled labour (Bridges, 2000). In the former case, the curriculum will be determined by the academic community, whereas in the latter case employers and the State will play a much larger role. Bridges quotes a Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (1999) paper on *Higher Education in the 21st Century: some possible futures* which illustrates this dichotomy:

'The expansion of public funding has not taken place on the basis of cultivating young minds for their own sake. Rather it has taken place on the basis of promoting societal, and not individual, values. Universities have been given a mission...(which) is quite clear; it is

to aid economic competitiveness and promote social inclusion.'(para 14)
(quoted in Bridges, 2000, p45)

Clearly the government will want both – educated and critical thinking individuals who are 'fit for purpose' (work).

One of the reasons for the increasing demand on HE to serve the needs of the economy is the changing nature of that economy (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000). Knowledge production, handling and transfer have become the trading norm in a post-Fordist economy. Countries at the forefront of the knowledge economy will prosper and HEIs have the potential to take a leading role. Gornitzka and Maassen see them as '*potentially, key socio-economic organisations in any society*' (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000, p225). The impact of these beliefs is being felt in the institutions in terms of the curriculum design and in the teaching and learning methods being employed. Academia and the world of work are moving closer together and not just in the traditional professional vocational arenas of education, law and medicine (Saunders and Machell, 2000). As Peters has said:

'The age of mass production is fading fast. The emerging economy is based on knowledge, imagination, curiosity and talent. What if we could learn to tap the wonderful, rich differences among people?'
(Peters, 1994).

Van Ernst *et al* (2001) have argued that if HE is to develop curiosity and empower people for the benefit of the economy and society, then it must develop a new paradigm for educating its students. The future of HEIs is:

'...inseparable from those of the societies they serve and ... universities will be diminished, even damaged, if they ignore the widening gulf between different sectors of society'
(Coffield and Williamson, 1997, p21)

Gunther Kress has argued that at times when there is stability in the social and economic systems, the curriculum can be seen to mirror this

and offer cultural reproduction. The young people are educated to reflect the values and aspirations of the prevailing times. He argues that this was true of the period from the mid 19th to the mid 20th centuries. However, in the second part of the twentieth century the pace of change escalated; *'...gradual changes which marked the preceding 100 years began to act together, producing change at an increasing pace.'* (Kress, 2000, p133). Under these circumstances the curriculum has to change radically and rapidly to provide the skills and knowledge that will be needed by the students in their future lives as mature adults.

'"Reproduction" is no longer a plausible metaphor for institutional education and its curricula. When tomorrow is unlikely to be like today and when the day after tomorrow is definitely going to be unlike yesterday, curricular aims and guiding metaphors have to be reset.'
(Kress, 2000, p134)

A mass HE system needs to reflect society properly and must engage with people from a much wider social spectrum than it did in an elite system (Barr, 2002). Policies to enhance social inclusion have become central to policy and the target of getting 50% of the population under 30 years old into HE is currently being refined to ensure that this includes reaching the most excluded sectors of society.

Two key themes of policy begin to emerge from this societal change: workforce development in the knowledge economy and increasing fairer access to HE as a means of realising potential. These are ambitious aims and at least one commentator doubts whether the recommendations rest on secure conclusions. Trow (1998) argues that:

'...its [the Dearing Report's] many comments and recommendations are predicated on a uniformity among institutions of higher education that is neither factually true nor desirable, even by the Committee's own values.'
(Trow, 1998)

Will such a diverse sector be able to respond to the changes, both internal and external, it faces?

3.4 The Changing Face of Higher Education

Baldrige and Deal (1983) suggested there were three trends driving changes in the latter part of the 20th Century. Universities were affected by external pressures aimed at efficiency and accountability. These came to the fore during the Thatcher years and altered the emphasis for change from being essentially internal (driven by reforming academics and professional officers) to one of external public accountability. Secondly, linked to this, there has been a change from 'the carrot to the stick'. Incentives have shifted from voluntarily instituted improvements to mandatory requirements imposed through legislation (e.g. disability legislation), inspection (e.g. benchmarking and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)) and the funding mechanisms (e.g. HEFCE's directives). Thirdly, the move to a mass, rather than an elite, system has produced pressures that have driven innovation particularly in learning and teaching (e.g. new programmes and use of ICT). Add to these three a decline in government funding per student and a growth in assessment (Hodson and Thomas, 2001) and the system is under strain.

The pressures noted above have produced a sector changing on almost every front. One of the key changes, explored in Chapter 2, related to the nature of the market. Middlehurst (1997) has observed that there are tensions in a regulatory-based system forced to move towards operating in a market economy. Competitive market-based principles are problematical when applied to a public service concerned with quality and standards. Making the business of HE more efficient by cutting unit costs, tendering for services, competing with rivals, responding to the market-needs and timescales of employers wanting bespoke courses, for example, may run counter to maintenance of high academic standards (Leathwood and Phillips, 2000).

Gornitzka and Maassen (2000) state that massification of HE as government policy inevitably leads to concerns over costs to the public purse. They argue that this manifests itself in four trends:

- *'an interest in strengthening institutional governance and management as a way of improving institutional efficiency and effectiveness;*
- *worries about the quantitative and qualitative relationship between higher education and the labour market;*
- *an interest in using structural adaptations as a means to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the system as a whole...; and*
- *concerns with the length of study for the basic qualification.'*
(Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000, p228)

We are seeing an HE system which has become more managerial and which has adopted methods such as target setting, appraisal and line management from business and industry to improve efficiency (Welch, 1998; Leathwood and Phillips, 2000). Reports in the media express concerns that new graduates do not have the skills required by employers and that they aren't as literate, numerate or knowledgeable as graduates once were (Leon, 2002a; 2002b). Such comparisons are almost meaningless, particularly as they are comparing the top 5% of the ability range 30 years ago with the top 40% today, and the reports seldom mention the improved skills such as in ICT or presentation. However, such media reports carry powerful messages to the public.

Curriculum development has promoted new courses emphasising employability skills (Leathwood and Phillips, 2000). Whether the skills we deem to be important today are those that graduates actually will need in five years time, however, remains to be seen. Many countries are also looking at changing the structure of HE by, for example, integrating the university and the non-university sectors into a seamless further and higher education (FHE) system (as envisaged in the UK) or by encouraging the development of sub-campus (Italy) (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000). Shorter courses are also becoming more prevalent in many countries including the UK and sub-degree programmes are proliferating. However, vocational education involving elements of work-based learning and widening participation is not cheap and the government is beginning to realise that this is going to cost more, not less, than traditional HE.

3.5 Shifting Control

Many commentators have described the creeping state-control of HE (for example, Webber, 2000; Robertson, 1999). Bassey (2003) has commented that *'the English education system has moved in the last fifteen years from being probably the least state-controlled system in the world to the most.'* (p28). Government has exerted control by introducing constraining practices through funding controls, QA measures and a requirement for accountability. In the UK, there is now a Minister for Higher Education and the changing name of the government department is a clear indication of how the thinking on education has been increasingly tied to economic objectives: Department of Education; Department for Education and Science; Department for Education and Employment; and now the Department for Education and Skills. Government priorities change and universities respond but they are more like oil tankers which take a long time to change course than a nippy speed-boat that can dodge the waves of changing policy. Flexibility to respond to government direction is possible (but not always desired by the sector) and it pre-supposes that governments know what they are doing and why. As Robertson said in his paper on the Dearing Committee's deliberations: *'In fact Governments often do not know what they want to do, and make it up as they go along'* (Robertson, 1999, p126).

To make sure that HE complies with the government policy of the moment and follows the efficiency and effectiveness mantra, quality inspection reports are given metrics and publicised widely (for example the Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Control measures applied to schools have been adapted informally by the media for HE, such as the publication of league tables of performance, and these contain powerful messages to the market. This is what Ball (1990) has called a *'discourse of derision'* and a *'policy of blame'*. Indeed, David Blunkett, when he was Secretary of State for Education, promised a 'name and shame' policy, first applied in schools,

for HEIs deemed to be failing (Tysome, 1998, Leathwood and Phillips, 2000).

Crudely, HEIs have changed from being what Carlson (1975) termed '*domesticated organisations*' to being '*wild organisations*'. Domesticated organisations are those that are cared for and nurtured and whose existence is guaranteed. They experience some competition but their funding is only loosely linked to their quality. Wild organisations, on the other hand, have to struggle for their survival in a hostile world. Their existence is not certain and the support that they have is dependent on the quality of performance – the survival of the fittest.

Bridges (2000) describes the '*deconstruction of the University*' affecting virtually every element of university life (Bridges, 2000, p38). He articulates four changing identities for universities. '*The identity of place*' has changed through acquisitions of new sites and mergers. Universities now oversee HE delivered off-campus at accredited sites and, through the use of ICT, in people's homes. Students can now access HE without visiting a university campus at all. '*The identity of time*' has also changed. The academic year is more loosely defined and is rarely fragmented into three terms of equal length with teaching delivered solely between 9am – 5pm. Twilight and evening classes, weekend and intensive week-long courses, short courses and summer schools all crowd the academic year. Flexibility of delivery to suit individual needs is getting closer and the dream of 'just for you' education could soon be a reality. '*The identity of the scholarly community*' of academics working together to deliver programmes alongside their research has virtually disappeared with increased use of off-site delivery, contract and part-time staff and work-based learning. '*The identity of the student community*' has likewise become much more diverse with many more demands on students' time – even the more traditional full-time student is likely to have a substantial part-time job and may well also have family responsibilities.

3.6 Future Trends

Crystal ball gazing is a dangerous pastime in a piece of research but it is worth pausing a moment to consider what the future might hold in HE as the trends, as they appear now, inform current decisions about what the future will be like. In their review of the education policy of New Labour, Phillips and Harper-Jones (2003) identified four dominant themes affecting schools. Their work is based mainly on a review of chapters in books by Docking (2000) and Fielding (2001) and the themes are:

- *'a determination to raise educational standards;*
 - *a quest to undertake modernisation of educational systems, structures and practices;*
 - *a commitment to promoting choice and diversity within education; and*
 - *a preoccupation with what Broadfoot (2001) and others refer to as the culture of performativity'.*
- (Phillips and Harper-Jones, 2003, p126)

The fourth theme is a key one as it has been affecting schools and colleges for some time and it is increasingly impacting on HE. Phillips and Harper-Jones (2003) consider performativity as the most dominant theme of the four. Broadfoot (2001) defined it as being rooted in *'a rationalistic assumption that it is possible – and indeed, desirable, to “measure” performance, whether this be of the individual pupil or the institution as a whole'*. She argues that this has led the government to the following beliefs:

- *'that decisions concerning curriculum (inputs), pedagogy (processes) and assessment (outcomes) should be centralised;*
- *that there are standards of 'quality' that can be objectively measured;*
- *that it is necessary and desirable to assess institutional quality according to externally defined 'performance indicators';*
- *that the punitive use of league tables and other publicly shaming devices will help drive up educational performance;*

- *that assessment is a 'neutral' measuring instrument which only requires further technical developments to make it more effective.'*
(Broadfoot (2001) in Phillips and Harper-Jones, 2003, p130)

HE is not immune to these beliefs.

The needs of a mass system are qualitatively different in character from those of the elite system and this is recognised by the funding council (HEFCE Workshop Report, 1996). Participation in HE has moved from a largely full-time/part-time dichotomy to participant-determined flexibility. HEIs are in the business of producing (research) and marketing knowledge (Barnett, 2000b). They are being 'encouraged' to be much more entrepreneurial in these activities and funding is being used, through such streams as the Higher Education Innovations Fund (HEIF), to help drive this agenda.

Some commentators describe this situation as the 'post-modern university' where everything is changing (Smith and Webster, 1997; Bridges, 2000). Smith and Webster describe it as a '*multiplicity of differences*':

'...different academics pursuing different knowledges, different teams of researchers combining and recombining to investigate shifting topics, different sorts of students following different courses, with different modes of study and different concerns among themselves, different employment arrangements for different types of staff – difference everywhere in this post-modern, flexible, accommodating university.'
(Smith and Webster, 1997, p104)

One element of current policy that does seem to be here to stay and which will play a dominant part is vocationalism. As we have seen, there is a growing trend to promote the needs of employers and the workplace in the HE curriculum (called by Saunders and Machell (2000) Higher Education/Work Relations or HEWR for short). As in schools, this was once part of the hidden curriculum but now it is becoming part of the '*explicit curriculum*' (Hickcox and Moore, 1992; Saunders and Machell,

2000). It is clear to see in government initiatives like foundation degrees which are explicitly employer-led developments, but it is also manifesting itself in other undergraduate and post-graduate curricula as enterprise, entrepreneurship, employability and business units embedded in courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The emphasis on what were originally called transferable skills was underpinned by the belief that skills would be easily transferred to the workplace. The terminology has changed to key skills and employability skills and attempts are being made to flag up more explicitly where these skills are taught and assessed in the curriculum in the same way as has been done in other post-compulsory contexts (Dearing, 1997; Knight and Yorke, 2003).

Another element of the neo-correspondence between student experience and employment is the development of curriculum explicitly reflecting the needs of the employers and helping them address issues related to workforce development: in other words a growing 'bespoke' curriculum offering. HE and employers are working in partnership to develop something of mutual benefit and whether this aspiration can be realised and to what benefit is explored in this research.

The policies related to WP and lifelong learning are likely to continue to be major influences on the HEIs. Government is already using funding to push forward its WP agenda. This requires significant changes to be made to access and admissions, curriculum and assessment, student support and teaching and learning. As institutions adopt these new methods under the guise of WP, they will be demanded by, and will benefit, all students. Cultural change in HE is always most easily made when demanded by students.

3.7 The Curriculum

This research is essentially about curriculum reform in HE in response to changes that are occurring in society. It is necessary to consider what

curriculum is and how it develops. Much of the curriculum development literature is based on work on the school curriculum but the fundamental principles are applicable in the post-compulsory sector. Following a consideration of these principles, this chapter will focus on the implications for the curriculum development process within HE.

As we saw earlier, in times of rapid societal change, the curriculum comes under scrutiny and becomes the focus of public and political attention. Moore argues that history shows us that the time of greatest curriculum change occurs when there is a significant shift affecting the student body. He exemplifies this using the impact of raising the school leaving age to 16 years in 1972 (ROSLA). This did two things: it increased the number of young people in compulsory education and changed the composition of the student body, increasing the proportion for whom the existing curriculum was not appropriate. Curriculum changes ensued which can be linked to ROSLA such as the introduction of the Certificate of Secondary Education, designed specifically for students of lower academic ability, to run alongside the Ordinary Levels. The relevance of ROSLA here is that massification and WP initiatives in HE are affecting the size and composition of the student body. Massification has impacted on the way the curriculum is delivered (for example, through modularisation and changes in the mode of delivery): WP will impact too.

Kelly (1999) also states that the curriculum changes to keep pace with changes in society but he identifies three other important forces leading to innovation. Firstly, there is the impact of politicians, policy makers and their advisers who need to be seen to be doing something. Both New Labour, and the Conservative governments that preceded it, focused on education as a major area of reform. Secondly, technology and the implications of the information age are changing the content of curriculum and the way that it is delivered (Conole and Dyke, 2004). Thirdly, the latter part of the 20th century has seen an emphasis on curriculum planning rather than curriculum drift (Hoyle, 1969a). Before looking

further at the underpinning ideologies and models of curriculum, we need to define what the curriculum is.

Goodson (1994) remarks that definitions of 'curriculum' have not been discussed as widely as the processes of curriculum development and implementation. Stenhouse (1975) uses the definition given in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary which states that curriculum is: '*a course: especially a regular course of study as at a school or university*'. He points out that such a course contains the planned intentions of those in control and goes on to develop a definition based on pedagogy and the process of learning. In many countries, as in the UK, the curriculum in schools is prescribed and forms a national model followed by all children. Put simply, the curriculum is what is taught (content) and how it is taught (mode of delivery). Marsh (1997a) also includes a curriculum product i.e. some kind of document or pack describing the aims of the teachers, the learning outcomes to be achieved by the student and the assessment method.

Morrison and Ridley (1989) take a wider view of the curriculum which is:

'all those activities designed or encouraged within the school's organizational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. It includes not only the formal programme of lessons, but also the 'informal' programme of so-called extra-curricular activities as well as those features which produce the school's "ethos" .' (cited in Preedy, 1989, p 41)

In this definition the whole curriculum is made up of several parts (Kelly, 1999). The formal curriculum of the timetabled activities usually consisting of named subjects and the informal curriculum consisting of the other activities pursued by students as part of their experience. Kelly also describes the '*hidden curriculum*' which consists of:

'...those things which pupils learn at school because of the way in which the work of the school is planned and organised, and through the materials provided, but which are not in themselves

overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangements.'
(Kelly, 1999, p4)

He further distinguishes between the planned curriculum which is set down in syllabuses and prospectuses, and the received curriculum which describes the reality of the student's experience. Knight (2001) argues that these descriptions are misnomers and he distinguishes three forms of curriculum:

'...the planned curriculum, the created curriculum (often wrongly called the 'delivered' curriculum), and the understood curriculum (often misleadingly called the 'received' curriculum).'
(Knight, 2001, p369)

Goodson (1995) and others have described the difference between the curriculum as it is presented and what is actually experienced by the students (Young, 1977; Cuban, 1984). These authors make the distinction between curriculum theory manufactured according to particular aims and ideologies and the taught curriculum passed through the filter of teachers and students. Cuban (1984) likens this process to the effects of a hurricane on the ocean:

'In examining how various forces shaped the curriculum ... I used the metaphor of a hurricane to distinguish between curriculum theory, courses of study, materials and classroom instruction. Hurricane winds swept across the sea tossing up twenty foot waves, a fathom below the surface turbulent waters swirl, while on the ocean floor there is unruffled calm.'
(Cuban, 1984, p2)

Thus, the authorities may try to change the curriculum, but this may be resisted by the practitioners. Young (1977) describes this as '*curriculum as practice*' that reduces the socially constructed '*curriculum as fact*' to one that has been subjected to the interventions of teachers and students. Therefore any curriculum development must take both into account. Goodson (1995) states that the social context of curriculum works at two levels: the context of the time in which the curriculum is

conceived and that of delivery in the classroom. In the case of HE curriculum development, factors of social change in the external economic and political climate must be taken into account alongside the changes that are being seen in the arena of delivery of that curriculum. However, there is an important difference for the HE curriculum as universities are charged with creating new knowledge which schools are not and so there is an additional internal force on the HE curriculum.

One aspect beginning to impact on the university curriculum is the change in the nature of the discipline or subject. In further education there has been a broadening of the curriculum with a well-developed vocational route for students lying alongside the more academic AS/A2 route. The political demands of widening access and mass HE have meant the universities have had to reassess their own curriculum in the light of these changes – a plethora of courses has developed in response to this driver of a greater breadth of subjects.

In 1972, Reid observed that the universities dominated the system and the schools bowed to this authority often to their detriment:

'Schools are, however, poorly equipped to resist university pressures. To a large extent they allow the legitimacy of the university demands, and have evolved an authority structure which is linked to them.'

(Reid, 1972, p106)

In contrast, universities today are under increasing pressure to change their curriculum offer in response to changes in the school curriculum; broadening it to include subjects such as travel and tourism, equestrian studies and creative industries in response both to the needs of the economy and students' demands. They are also under pressure to change the nature of the teaching and learning experience in line with the more sophisticated expectations of their clientele, for example students now see good quality ICT provision as a given not as a luxury. Change in

the mode of teaching demands change in the curriculum and this is relevant to delivery of the collaborative programmes studied here.

Whether in schools, colleges or universities, the curriculum is complex to define (or paradoxically, very simple). Kelly (1999) puts forward a disarmingly brief and simple definition that captures this complexity: *'curriculum is the totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made'*. As we have already seen, the *'totality of experiences'* is contributed to both by what is planned and by what occurs in an unplanned way. When looking at curriculum developments such as the ones that form the focus of this research, it is the planned curriculum that is of greatest interest as this is the product that results from the partnerships working collaboratively to a political agenda. The key element is therefore *'the provision made'* which comes into being through a curriculum planning process.

Several factors are important here in shaping the way the curriculum should be developed. The government has chosen an outcomes-based view of the curriculum as promoted by Dearing (1997) through the programme specification templates provided by the QAA. This requires a particular form of curriculum development which concentrates on measurable learning outcomes. Curriculum development is a complex process which needs to be undertaken by a knowledgeable team. As we shall see, the process of curriculum development is not always well understood by all partners in a collaborative project. To understand the curriculum development process, there needs to be an understanding of the ideology which is driving the curriculum and the model of curriculum being used. These will be considered in brief in the following sections.

3.7.1 Ideologies in Education

In the last twenty years there has been a concerted effort by government to exert control on the curriculum in order to establish national benchmarks of learning at different levels of study and to raise standards.

This began in the schools with the introduction of the National Curriculum for Schools in 1988, the development of national standards in post-compulsory education through for example, the National Vocational Qualifications in vocational training, and most recently, the production of subject benchmarks in HE. However, even if the curriculum adheres to certain published standards, it doesn't necessarily mean that what is taught is standardised. Each change that occurs within the curriculum, Armitage *et al* explain, represents 'a set of fundamental beliefs, assumptions and values, collectively termed 'ideologies' about the nature of education and training' (1999, p175). Barnes (1982) describes how, in the curriculum planning process, the values of the developers will spill out into the curriculum:

'No curriculum planning is neutral: every curriculum is imbued with values. These values embody a view of the kind of people we wish our pupils to become...and of the kind of society that such people could live in...As Eisner (1969) once wrote when discussing the idea of neutral curriculum planning, under the rug of technique there lies an image of man.'
(Barnes, 1982, p60)

The ideologies forming the background to curriculum planning are rarely articulated. This element is seldom discussed at the start of the curriculum development process or at any other point. There is usually an unspoken understanding that all partners in the process are working to the same beliefs and values. When they are not, problems can ensue.

Scrimshaw (1981, p4) defines an ideology as '*that system of belief which gives general direction to the educational policies of those who hold those beliefs*'. This is a consensual definition that allows different groups to hold a range of beliefs. The opposing view is that educational ideology is based on the dominant beliefs of the political power base and that this can grow through the control exerted through the curriculum. Effectively, it strengthens the power base of the dominant class (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1981).

There are many ideologies which underpin education but most of the literature centres around five basic types (Preedy, 1989; Slater, 1992; Kelly, 1999; Armitage *et al*, 1999; Moore, 2000; Kress, 2000). **Classical Humanism** is based on the idea that the education an individual receives is dependent on his/her place in society. The resulting curriculum tends to be highly academic and non-vocational and is dominated by teacher-led instruction. **Liberal Humanism**, on the other hand, also emphasises knowledge but with more equitable access to it (Morrison and Ridley, 1989). The curriculum is developmental and individuals are inducted into areas of experience through active and co-operative learning with the teacher acting as guide and facilitator (Slater, 1992). The third ideology, **Progressivism**, owes much to the work of Dewey (1915) and it emphasises the individual student who is educated through experiential learning with the teacher acting as facilitator and resource provider.

The fourth and fifth ideologies emphasise society. **Instrumentalism** stresses the economy and the underlying belief that a highly educated workforce is needed to compete. This ideology, sometimes called vocationalism (Carr, 1998), has become increasingly dominant in the UK (Armitage *et al*, 1999). Elements of a vocational and skills-led curriculum have become embedded at all levels of education and students are seen as '*...preparing themselves for their roles in the workplace and in society as a whole*' (Armitage *et al*, 1999, p177). The mode of learning is student induction into a vocational arena with the teacher acting as transmitter of knowledge and skills. Finally, **Reconstructionism** views education as a means of effecting societal change. Those in political power use education to promote particular viewpoints and actions. At its best it can promote social and political understanding and action (Slater, 1992) but in its worst forms it can promote a single extreme view to sustain those in political power.

Although the ideology underpinning any curriculum development may not be explicitly and overtly stated, it will affect significantly the product. Moore (2000) believes that this is why debates about the curriculum in

particular and education in general are so fiercely fought because *'what we know affects who we are (or are perceived to be). Issues of knowledge entail issues of identity.'* (Moore, 2000, p17). In the case of instrumentalist and reconstructionist ideologies which have resonance with current educational policy, society imposes a particular view of 'worthwhileness' on the curriculum either stressing economic (instrumentalism) or societal (reconstructionism) value. The point of presenting these different ideologies in this research is to note that the increasing government influence being brought to bear on HE is bound to have an impact on the structure and process of curriculum as the aims swing towards satisfying extrinsic demands. In order to understand how the ideology affects the curriculum and the processes involved in curriculum development, curriculum frameworks will now be explored.

3.7.2 Curriculum Frameworks

Marsh defines a curriculum framework as *'a group of related subjects or themes which fit together according to a predetermined set of criteria to appropriately cover an area of study'* (Marsh, 1997b, p27). A trend in education is for the curriculum framework to be prescribed by those who wish to maintain control of what is taught. In HE, this has already had an impact on the undergraduate curriculum where the format of programme specifications is specified by the QAA. Marsh identifies nine elements normally included in a curriculum framework:

- *A rationale or platform*
- *Scope and parameters of the curriculum area*
- *Broad goals and purposes of subjects within the curriculum area*
- *Guidelines for course design*
- *Content*
- *Teaching and learning principles*
- *Guidelines for evaluation of subjects*
- *Criteria for accreditation and certification of subjects*
- *Future developments for the area.*

(Marsh, 1997b, p30)

Education in the UK has become dominated by regulation in recent years and curriculum frameworks illustrate this. The guidelines issued by the QAA are very specific and result effectively in a blueprint for curriculum design. Each innovation is matched with a prescription for how it must be done. This produces uniformity rather than innovation. For example, the introduction of foundation degrees in 2000 was closely followed in 2002 by the Draft Qualification Benchmark which defined the curriculum as needing to include specific information (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Headings for a programme specification from the foundation degree benchmark statement (QAA, 2002)

<p style="text-align: center;">Foundation Degree Benchmark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a foundation degree?• Its defining characteristics (as indicated in the prospectus, published in 2000)• Accessibility (of the curriculum, in particular how it addresses widening participation)• Articulation and Progression (into further academic or professional qualifications)• Employer involvement• Flexibility• Partnership• Knowledge, understanding and skills• Learning, teaching and assessment <p>(QAA, 2002)</p>
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Under each heading the potential curriculum developers are given instruction on what should be included and in some cases in what format. This is done with the acknowledged aim of helping those involved in developing curriculum but the language of control is thinly disguised. The following is an extract from the Draft Qualification Benchmark and it

shows that the requirements of QA and review are important aims of the document.

'...The qualification benchmark will:

- *Assist those directly involved to design and validate foundation degree programmes;*
- *Provide general guidance for describing the generic learning outcomes associated with the foundation degree;*
- *Support internal quality assurance;*
- *Assist reviewers to make judgements about foundation degree provision;*
- *Help other interested parties to understand the purpose, generic content and outcomes of foundation degree programmes.'*

(QAA, 2002, p2)

In addition to the framework chosen for curriculum planning, there is also a host of approaches to the development process. These curriculum models came to the fore in the United States in the 1940s and spread to the United Kingdom in the 1960s. Although many are described in the literature, four basic approaches dominate, each with a different focus.

Perhaps the best known of these, and certainly one widely quoted (for example Reid, 1989; Marsh, 1997b; Kelly, 1999; Armitage *et al*, 1999) is the Tyler Model (1949), sometimes called the objectives model. This highlights the **product** of the learning by focusing on the setting of behavioural objectives that are measurable i.e. it describes what the learner will be able to do as a result of following the curriculum. The model has been criticised as being over-prescriptive, instrumental and too linear (see Stenhouse, 1975; Eisner, 1979a; Rudduck and Hopkins, 1985; Marsh, 1997b; and Kelly, 1999) but despite this it has become very influential in teaching particularly at secondary level and beyond. Kelly (1999) has noted that almost every curriculum document or lesson plan has some elements of this objectives model underpinning it and it is certainly recognisable in the models for good practice put forward by the QAA for programme specifications.

Other schools of thought focus on different aspects of curriculum such as the **content** (see Hirst and Peters, 1970; Hirst, 1974). In this framework,

the curriculum is arranged around forms of knowledge, usually structured around subjects. This remains a strongly-held view of curriculum by HE staff, possibly reflecting part of their purpose as knowledge creators. The third framework focuses on the **process** of learning and develops the learners' ability to use the knowledge they gain. It is based on the idea of developing a set of educational encounters through which students learn (Stenhouse, 1975). Bruner (1963; 1966) developed the idea further into the spiral curriculum in which every subject had a natural progression of knowledge, understanding and skills which could be developed from a very simple form (still recognisable as the subject) into ever more complex understanding as the student encountered it at a higher level.

Finally, there is the **situational** model that considers the cultural context of the learning (Armitage *et al*, 1999) and draws on the work of Lawton (1983) and Skilbeck (1976). The curriculum is seen as a selection from this cultural context which is developed with regard to philosophical, sociological and psychological factors that help determine the final product.

Ultimately all these models are a reflection of the ideologies that underpin the authors' educational aspirations. In reality, most courses are designed using a mix of these approaches (Armitage *et al*, 1999) It is important to consider how these ideas and frameworks impact on the undergraduate curriculum.

3.8 The Undergraduate Curriculum

One of the key elements of the mission of an HEI is the '*creation and dissemination of knowledge*' (Short, 2002). Although there has recently been an attempt to increase uniformity of expectation in the undergraduate curriculum (for example by the QAA and benchmarking) the truth, more often than not, is that the curriculum reflects a host of changes over time. Longstreet and Shane argue that:

'...curriculum is an historical accident-it has not been deliberately developed to accomplish a clear set of purposes. Rather it has evolved as a response to the increasing complexity of educational decision-making.'
(Longstreet and Shane, 1993, p7).

Long-term this view may be true to some extent although the current curriculum product reflects a number of short-term deliberate changes.

Short (2002) examined the HE curriculum in the United States and identified a number of discontinuities between the rationale for the curriculum including its specified aims and the actuality of the curriculum experienced by the students. He argued that one of the main reasons for this was the underlying faulty premise that the curriculum should be organised on the same basis as the research operation in universities. The purpose of an undergraduate education is not solely to be prepared for a role as a researcher. The increased emphasis on research and the conflict that can occur between the research mission and the teaching mission has been written about at length and suggestions have been made about how teaching and learning at undergraduate level can be strengthened (Gaff *et al*, 1997; Stark and Lattuca, 1997; Hattie and Marsh, 2004). However, most of these authors have looked at changes that can be produced within the existing structure of the curriculum i.e. effectively reproducing the structures which have led to the problems in the first place.

The accepted wisdom that HE teaching must be informed by research has been challenged. One such study has concluded that there is no relationship between teaching and research at the scale of the individual academic or the Department (Hattie and Marsh, 2004). This has been misinterpreted by those seeking to separate teaching and research in support of the move towards research-led and teaching-led contracts and institutional organisation. Hattie and Marsh refute this interpretation of their work and argue for more research into the nature of the research-

teaching nexus rather than basing developments in this area of HE organisation and management on strongly-held belief:

'...a major journey should be to investigate the relationship at the institution level, the causal mechanisms that lead to greater (or any) link [between research and teaching] and to stop making pronouncements based on belief. The question as to the nexus is a research question, and only dependable evidence will address it.'

(Hattie and Marsh, 2004, p11)

This argument is likely to continue during the next decade as HEIs reorganise and restructure themselves to face the challenges of the new millennium and, in the UK at least, arguments are made about how research funding should be distributed.

3.8.1 The Organisation of the Curriculum

In his article on the US system, Short argues that a new form of organisation of the curriculum is needed based on four functions of university teaching. The first function is to provide a '*general education for all students*' that provides the skills and knowledge required for students to become active citizens able to function in the world. Secondly, universities need to provide for the '*education of specialists*' that allows students to work in a specialised academic field or in a professional role. Thirdly, there is the '*education of researchers*' to provide a ready supply of new talent for the research and knowledge creation that is their primary business. Fourthly, the '*education of educators*', the education of university staff to work with students in each of the first three functions (Short, 2002, p144). These functions could provide the framework for the shape of the curriculum offered within the university. The implication for this in terms of the undergraduate curriculum lies in the nature of what is required to provide the first two of these i.e. the nature of an undergraduate curriculum providing a general education **and** the degree of specialism required.

As in the case of schools, HEIs need to pay attention to the “hidden curriculum”. It has been suggested that the discipline taught is more than just the content and delivery of the topics making up the modules (Kelly, 1999), it also involves the way scholars in that discipline think about how the world works (Wineburg, 2001). The hidden curriculum in a discipline will involve how students are socialised into the professional arena of the subject and the culture of the academic community (Anderson, 2001). It is in part about building identity. Where HEIs are working in partnership, the development of this academic identity may be compromised by the different cultures presented round the table. In schools and colleges for example, the lack of a culture that values research has been identified as a problem in the development of educational practice (Ramaley, 2004). Where collaboration to develop curriculum involves multiple partners, this difference in assumptions about the “hidden curriculum” may have an influence of how easily the partners work together.

In the UK, Barnett *et al* (2001) have observed that the undergraduate curriculum has received less attention in the literature than other elements of HE change. The structure of the curriculum has been considered by a few (now, rather dated) studies (Boys *et al*, 1988; Squires, 1987; Silver and Brennan, 1988; Goodlad, 1997) and more recently, there has been interest in the skills agenda and its impact on HE (Bennett *et al*, 2000; Saunders and Machell, 2000; Blackwell *et al*, 2001; Winch and Clarke, 2003). One of the difficulties in studying HE curriculum is the number of factors both internal and external to the institution which have an influence. Barnett (2000b) describes this situation as HE moving from a complex world to a supercomplex world.

A number of factors can be identified as having an effect on the emerging undergraduate curriculum and its supercomplexity (Barnett, 2000b; Barnett *et al*, 2001). Firstly, knowledge continues to be a major driver of the curriculum particularly in institutions that are strong in knowledge creation through research. Academics often identify more strongly with their subject than with the institution that employs them and may market

themselves or their departments without reference to the university at all. Their professional interactions are based within the disciplines and through conferences and journals. This individualism has been described neatly by Huber (1990) who reports the remark once made that a university is merely a set of departments held together by the central heating system! The culture and identity of a subject comes through the power of its knowledge field (Huber, 1990; Henkel, 2000). This is a different context than in the school curriculum in which pedagogical processes and the development of basic skills play a greater part.

3.8.2 Pressures on the Undergraduate Curriculum

The undergraduate curriculum is being affected by a number of external and internal pressures. Bridges (2000, p41) describes what he sees as the '*deconstruction of the subject*' which started in the 1960s with the formation of new campus universities such as Sussex and York who chose to organise themselves around interdisciplinary schools some of which had a major impact on the way that knowledge is packaged – environmental studies is a good example. This was followed by modularisation of the curriculum in the late 1980s and 1990s that had a much wider impact on the nature of knowledge and will continue to have repercussions well into this century. The rationale for modularisation was based on flexibility for students and institutions but this often failed to materialise as the demands of course coherence, the increased administrative burden on staff and the needs for departments to protect income streams became apparent (Bridges, 2000; Bennett *et al*, 2000). Knowledge became compartmentalised and the students were fed a diet of almost unrelated, topic-specific learning experiences without these being located in broad, overarching frameworks enabling them to make greater sense of the world. However, modularisation did mark a shift towards student-centredness, a rise in the importance of learner support mechanisms and the need for universities to satisfy the market.

The nature of knowledge is being affected increasingly by the demands of usefulness (Lyotard, 1984) which is embedded in modern education policy. Thus, the curriculum is being affected by performativity and its demands of measurement, quantification, application, targets and standards (Barnett, 2000b; Priestley, 2002). Barnett (2000b) describes this as a shift *'from a curriculum for inner contemplation to a curriculum for outer performance'* (p261) External influences on the curriculum are greater where the disciplines of the institution are weaker (Barnett, 2000b). The needs of the labour market have increasingly taken centre-stage and this is reflected in the growth in vocational courses and in the introduction of a vocational flavour to the traditional curriculum (Hill *et al*, 1996). In order to increase the usefulness of HE, institutions are being encouraged increasingly to consult with employers before and during curriculum changes. The issue for the curriculum is whether the new courses can provide both the academic underpinning **and** the practical application that is demanded. In programmes that are shorter than traditional undergraduate courses, such as the foundation degrees, this may be a tall order (Winch and Clarke, 2003).

As we have seen, government is trying to influence HE and gain control of what is taught and how it is delivered. Priestley (2002) argues that globalisation is one factor that has led to national governments taking a much greater role in matters to do with education. He quotes Green (1999) who notes this paradox:

'...as governments lose control over various levers on their national economies and cede absolute sovereignty in foreign affairs and defence, they frequently turn to education and training as two areas where they do still maintain control.'
(quoted in Priestley, 2002, p129)

Another major force on the HE curriculum is the link between funding and performance ratings of HEIs. For example, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) (<http://www.rae.ac.uk/>) is a measure of performance which has a direct impact on the resource available to an institution for its

research activity. In terms of the teaching activity, the QAA's Subject Review process (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>), now replaced by institutional review, helped determine the number of additional students allocated and has an indirect impact on the funding flowing into the institution. Both are examples of performativity and increased central control.

A further influence on the undergraduate curriculum relates to the learning environment which has been transformed over a short period of time. For example, progressive undergraduate courses of thirty years ago would have included units on computer programming using punch cards (where the result would have required a wait of hours or days). Today the Internet gives instant access and even cheap calculators provide significant computational power. The Internet has changed the learning space in which the undergraduate curriculum operates (Burbules and Callister, 1999).

The change in the nature of knowledge, the increased emphasis on the world of work and the new learning technologies have assisted the emergence of the key skills movement in HE (Bridges, 2000; Saunders and Machell, 2000; Quicke, 2000; Winch and Clarke, 2003). Four key skills were proposed for HE: communication skills; numeracy; the use of information technology; and learning how to learn; and the Dearing Report linked them explicitly to employers' needs and the enterprise agenda (Dearing, 1997).

These trends in the undergraduate curriculum present a complex environment within which collaborative partnerships have to operate. Barnett *et al* (2001) identify an emerging curriculum differing in many ways from the more traditional curriculum (Figure 3.2). They make the point that the boundary between the traditional and the emerging is not hard and fast – the edges are blurred and the overlaps are plentiful. What we begin to see from this consideration of the literature is that the undergraduate curriculum is dependent on internal and external influences. Collaborative curriculum development, by its very nature, sits

at the boundary between the internal and external environments and will be affected by both and this will be considered in the following section.

Figure 3.2 Elements of the traditional curriculum and the emerging curriculum (Barnett *et al*, 2001, p437)

Traditional Curricula	Emerging Curricula
Knowing that	Knowing how
Written communication	Oral communication
Personal	Interpersonal
Internal	External
Disciplinary skills	Transferable skills
Intellectual orientation	Action orientation
Problem-making	Problem-solving
Knowledge as process	Knowledge as product
Understanding	Information
Concept-based	Issue-based
Knowledge-based	Task-based
Pure	Applied
Proposition-based learning	Experiential learning

3.9 Collaboration and Partnership in Curriculum Development

The development of collaborative projects is part of the current political agenda for education. Although collaboration between business and HE has existed in the research dimension for many years, there has been a strong steer for this to happen in terms of the curriculum too. The belief is that more relevant programmes will result which will increase the competitiveness of the economy. Collaborative relationships have both expanded in number and broadened in scope as this policy begins to work through into the curriculum (Skilbeck and Connell, 1996; Boyle and

Brown, 2000). However, work in the United States has suggested that collaborations between universities, colleges and business are often unsuccessful and about 50% of collaborations fail (Doz, 1996). Much of the work in the UK is new and the relationships have not bedded down fully. Little has been written about this type of work at undergraduate level but research into other types of partnership points to difficulties as well as benefits (e.g. Glatter, 2003; Lumby and Foskett, 2005; Tett *et al*, 2003). In particular, the effectiveness of such partnerships in producing the results that are being sought is called into question on a number of fronts (Wildridge *et al*, 2004).

Partnerships between universities and local stakeholders have been in operation in the professional arenas such as education, engineering and health for many years (Wildridge *et al*, 2004). It is the spread of this type of work to include other disciplines and the belief that this type of *modus operandi* is a panacea for all types of development in all types of institution (Boyle and Brown, 2000) that needs investigation. Government believes that it is only through employers becoming involved in HE that the student body will become more fit for the labour market so that further investment can be justified:

'Without an effective partnership developing between business and education, the prospects for an internationally competitive UK economy in the 21st century will become remote. The issues have to be high on the agenda both of the business community and of educationalists. We will all fail if answers cannot be found and applied.'

(Adams, 1992, p69)

Definitions of what constitutes partnership and collaboration is not universally accepted (IPPI, 2001, Tett *et al*, 2003, Bennett, N. *et al*, Wildridge *et al*, 2004). The seeds of education/ business partnerships can be traced back to the doctrine of the Thatcher governments and the belief in the capacity of the private sector to show public sector organisations the way to run their operations. This rather centralised controlling definition of partnership, in which one partner has the right answers and

the other has to adopt their way of working, has been adapted by New Labour (Jones and Bird, 2000). Deregulation and ideas of the market economy prevailing in the Conservative vision, it has been argued (Jones and Bird, 2000), led to destruction of social cohesion. New Labour has, as one of its main policy drivers, the need to tackle social exclusion through partnerships of a very different kind (Clegg and McNulty, 2002). Jones and Bird (2000) describe this as New Labour putting a '*strong social-ethical inflection*' on the idea of partnership. Thus partnership today is more a grouping of different agencies which are working together to tackle the major problems (mainly identified in the political agenda).

Although there is little written on the formation of partnerships for curriculum development, work has been undertaken on how the organisational context can facilitate collaboration (Denison, Hart and Kahn, 1996; Liedtka, 1996; Kezar, 2004). Work by Mohrman, Cohen and Mohrman (1995) based on private sector organisations identified six contextual factors which need to change in collaborating organisations to promote a successful outcome. Firstly the **strategy** (mission) of the organisation needs to identify collaboration as important. Then the **work of the organisation** needs to be re-examined. In this research this would be the development of the new programmes. Thirdly the **structure** will need to develop integrating mechanisms to allow for partnership. Kezar notes that this can be difficult in HE because of the strongly demarcated discipline structures (Kezar, 2004). Fourthly the **processes** involved need to be changed: in curriculum development terms this might be the elements such as quality assurance or accreditation. **Rewards** need to be developed to provide incentives and accountability to both individuals and the participating organisations. Finally, people need to be **trained** in order to take advantage of collaborative partnerships and to make them work. Although this model was not designed to consider collaborations for curriculum development, the elements provide an interesting starting point for examining the partnerships being researched here.

In this study the agenda is both social and economic: to tackle the problem of social exclusion and to fulfil the needs of the workplace for well-qualified and skilled employees. The resulting partnerships are inter-agency groupings seeking shared solutions to problems. The policy is not without drawbacks though. As many researchers have observed, there is a tension between the individualistic nature of modern society and collaborative work (Jones and Bird, 2000; Boyle and Brown, 2000; Seddon *et al*, 2004). Tony Blair himself has commented on the dilemma of *'how to create the bonds of a civil society and community in a way compatible with the individualistic nature of modern economic, social and cultural life.'* (Blair, 1997, p2) He goes on to describe his vision for this new way of working in which government is more facilitative and supportive of what works on the ground. This advocacy for partnership work is founded on beliefs rather than hard evidence. There is a need to understand why some collaborative developments work and why some fail.

3.9.1 Benefits of Partnership

It is interesting to note the use of the language. 'Collaboration' and 'partnership' are words that have at the heart of their definition the idea of cooperation and working to a common goal. Dhillon (2005, p215) describes this as the *'social glue for achieving shared goals'*. This commonality of goals has to be contested in the light of the examples in the literature. Partnerships can be a good way to achieve shared aims of WP or workforce development but they can also be imposed as a solution to a perceived problem and may be the result of centralised 'control', albeit at a distance, rather than a 'bottom-up' solution identified by the people involved (Slack, 2004). Tett *et al* (2003) have pointed out that partnerships of the former type may in fact be disempowering the people involved rather than providing a way forward:

'Rather than create more opportunities for democratic engagement, partnerships may simply serve to incorporate

communities and professionals more deeply into arrangements that they have little genuine control over and that do not really serve their best interests.'
(Tett *et al*, 2003, p39)

There are many different definitions of collaborative partnerships (see Huxham, 1996; Pratt *et al* 1998; Tett *et al*, 2001; Tett *et al* , 2003). In its simplest form, it is about working jointly together with at least one other person/group. However, the terms and conditions under which the agreement to work together is made can produce very different results, and the nature of the power relationships that exist can also impact on the relationship. Tett *et al* (2003, p39) have defined collaboration:

*'...heuristically as a continuum. At a minimum, this means that individuals in one organization are working with other individuals in another organization in order to achieve some form of mutual benefit. At a maximum, it implies many organizations working together in harmony. Collaboration can be said to be taking place when a change in process, product or output takes place that requires contributions from all the organizations involved (Blair *et al*, 1998). Not all organizations or professionals will contribute equally, but they will be adjusting their decision making to take account of each other.'*

There are two pre-requisites that come out of this definition. Firstly, that there is '*mutual benefit*' which may be overtly stated in the aims of the collaboration, but as we shall see later, some aims may be obscured from other partners. Secondly, there should be '*a change in process, product or output*' as a result of the partnership. Whatever the definition, there is an underpinning assumption that collaborative working is a good thing and that it is a synergistic relationship where the total result is greater than the sum of the parts.

An analysis of the literature points to a number of commonalities in the benefits and problems associated with partnership work (see Geddes, 1997; Appelbee, 1998; Gilchrist, 1998; Hughes and Carmichael, 1998; Machell, 1999; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Jones, 2000; Tett *et al*, 2001; Clegg and McNulty, 2002; Tett *et al*, 2003). In their study of community

education, Tett *et al* (2003) identify five reasons for public service organisations collaborating:

- *To avoid individualism* (to stop duplication of effort, to stop problems falling between the responsibilities of separate organisations and to stop conflicts of interest).
- *To add value* (to allow resources and expertise to be shared)
- *To broaden the scale and scope of intervention* (to have a greater influence)
- *To tackle complex social issues* (which are so complex that they cannot be solved by just one element of public service)
- *Collaboration is seen as a virtue* (the political masters provide incentives to ensure it happens).

When considering collaborative partnerships between businesses and educational institutions, the benefits to partnership are broadened further. One of the key advantages identified in a study of foundation degrees (Foskett, 2003) came from the synergy of organisations working together that brought different perspectives into the problem-solving arena. This produced creative solutions to questions of content, organisation and delivery of the curriculum. By working in partnership, the team secured access to a range of skills required for curriculum development such as: the development of work-based learning modules; student support; project management; and business planning. However, finding partners is often challenging and in particular there is little evidence that employers wish to engage in this type of work to any great extent (Reeve and Gallacher, 2005).

Another oft quoted benefit (Veugelers and Zijlstra, 1995; Gilchrist, 1998; Jones 2000; Clegg and McNulty, 2002) is the way that networking assists the partners in gaining a better understanding of government policy and the external environment. Mixing with other professionals is helpful and can cement the personal relationships on which partnership depends.

The 'us and them' of the individual perspective *within* the partnership becomes an 'us and them' *between* the partnership and external bodies.

With increasing emphasis on enterprise in both the HE and FE sectors, collaboration with businesses and public sector employers can bring wider benefits than the immediate curriculum provision. Lawlor and Miller (1991) believe that partnership should make education more relevant to the work situation as all involved gain greater insight into the work of business and industry which can be fed into other teaching within the institution. In terms of curriculum development, teachers can become empowered by taking part in such activities providing as it does a forum for meaningful dialogue on pedagogical matters (Marsh, 1997a).

From an HEI perspective the reasons for engaging in partnership include many of the above benefits. Gun (1995) identified the following list, specifically in relation to franchising but many of the reasons are generic:

- Increased market opportunities especially through progression;
- Increased commercial income without corresponding increases in workload;
- Political advantage which comes from the university having links with colleges who can do the lower level work leaving the HEI free to engage in higher level work;
- Market advantage that comes from FE students having encountered the name of the university earlier in their career;
- Opportunity for the HEI to expand without putting additional strain on the physical resources of space and library;
- Opportunities for widening participation activities.

3.9.2 Barriers associated with Collaborative Partnerships

The benefits from collaborative working, however, come at a price. As Weaver *et al* 1987, p2) put it '*collaboration in curriculum development*

involves working with friends while cavorting with the enemy!' Tett *et al* (2003) have researched the literature to identify barriers existing in collaborative arrangements (Figure 3.3). Some of these are more applicable to studies of curriculum development than others and these will be considered later in detail. In their work they make a distinction between barriers that result from structures and organisation and rivalries referring to *'those active practices and attitudes that reinforce a non-collaborative culture'* (p42).

Figure 3.3: Barriers to Collaboration Identified from a Range of Studies (Tett *et al*, 2003, p40)

Barriers to Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation and non-coterminosity of boundaries • Differences in funding mechanisms and bases • Differences in aims, organizational culture and procedures • Lack of appropriate accommodation and resources • Differences in ideologies and values • Conflicting views about user interests and roles • Concerns for threats to autonomy and control and having to share credit • Communication difficulties • Lack of organizational flexibilities • Differences in perceived power • Inability to deal with conflict

When considering the barriers to collaboration we should begin at the beginning with the aims. Other researchers who have studied the nature of collaboration and partnership in curriculum development have found that one of the critical success factors is a clear articulation of the aims of each of the stakeholders taking part in the project and convergence of those aims towards a common purpose (Field, 1995; Wilson and Charlton, 1997; Jones, 2000; Tett *et al*, 2001; Clegg and McNulty, 2002).

The strategic aims of the programmes are usually agreed and subscribed to by all the partners. This clarity of purpose is important for securing commitment of the employers and other stakeholders to provide the staff resource necessary to undertake the curriculum development.

Another important element in this commitment is the assessment of risk and partners will make an early decision about this. Craft has developed a risk assessment tool for collaborative provision which allows the decision to be made on an assessment of factors such as the partner's strength and expertise and their experience of partnership (Craft, 2004). This is a more rigorous approach than the 'gut feeling' approach taken by partners in this research. Foundation degrees in particular present certain risks. They are relatively new awards with complex QA requirements. Many of the early programmes were developed quickly during 2002/03 before the standards and benchmarks had been defined, and securing partner involvement for collaborations was problematic (Rowley, 2005).

A number of other challenges to developing productive collaborative relationships also exist in the literature (for example Wilson and Pirie, 2000; Power, 2001; Tett *et al*, 2003; Glatter, 2003). In partnerships it is important that all participants feel that they have ownership of the development and that problems which result from unequal power relationships are avoided (Billis and Harris, 1996; Quicke, 2000; Trim, 2001; Milbourne *et al*, 2003; Tett *et al*, 2003). However, in a study of foundation degrees, Foskett (2003) found that, in the early stages, this sharing might contribute to a lack of firm leadership and unclear decision-making.

Good and productive working relationships require trust between the stakeholders (Richards and Horder, 1999; Morgan and Hughes, 1999; Clegg and McNulty, 2002; Milbourne *et al*, 2003). This is not easy to develop quickly and the long lead-time is partly due to cultural differences that can exist in the working environments of the different partners. Clegg and McNulty (2002) have shown that the existence of a relationship

before a formal partnership is formed provides useful 'cultural capital' that can be drawn on during the development process. Trust between organisations rarely exists; it is in reality trust between individuals that cements the relationship and ensures sustainability. This clearly depends on stability of personnel until completion of the job and also depends on the personnel involved having good skills of networking and project management (Geddes, 1997). Collaboration is easier where there is a greater degree of similarity in the organisational structures, purpose and philosophies between the partners (Jones, 2000; Tett *et al*, 2001).

The building of trust is also an issue in the FE sector where the colleges are just emerging from a decade of strong competition post-incorporation and are now expected to work together to provide a more rational and seamless provision. Other authors have indicated that cultural differences between FE and HE are real and must be acknowledged (Wilson and Charlton, 1997; Cameron and Lart, 2003; Lyle and Robertson, 2003) and one of the aims of this research will be to look at how far this affects collaborative curriculum development.

Employers may also suffer from mistrust of the other partners. They may be suspicious of educational institutions being able to deliver the product they want within an appropriate time-frame – university processes can seem painfully slow to employers and collaborative development even more so. In addition, there may be rivalry and competition between employers: this is more noticeable in the private sector but is also present within the public sector in the climate of market-led service provision. The element of trust often comes to the fore when resources are being discussed (Foskett, 2003; 2005). These problems can be overcome by investment of time from senior staff from all the organisations involved and the development of Memoranda of Agreement that state the financial basis of the arrangement.

Partners may feel threatened by working with others. This may be due to a fear that the credit will reflect on one partner at the expense of the rest.

Organisations may be wary of investing time and money into a joint development when the real benefits are unclear or intangible. They may also perceive this as a loss of autonomy particularly if one or more of the partners is more powerful in terms of money, resources, political standing or processes. At its worst, a partnership can go very wrong and lead to one or more partners experiencing significant problems. In franchise relationships, Benjamin (1993) likens this to a marriage: *'franchising is rather like a marriage – choosing the right partners may lead to success – choosing the wrong partner may lead to the courts and financial disaster'* (Benjamin, 1993 in Gun, 1995).

Finally, the complexity of a collaborative partnership means that someone has to manage it. QA is the responsibility of the university and this management task tends to fall to the HEI so that the cost is most likely to be borne by the university. Some research suggests that collaboration may be used as a vehicle of control over individuals or institutions (Smyth, 1993; Ball, 1994; Quicke, 2000). The meetings can become a means of disseminating decisions that have been taken elsewhere and of imposing conformity on the partnership. There is a big difference between a partnership in which the aims have been determined by the participants and one that is following an imposed agenda.

From a consideration of the barriers to collaboration comes an understanding of the conditions that help it prosper. Results from a number of studies (Pratt *et al*, 1998; Boyle and Brown, 2000; Wilson and Pirrie, 2000; Jones, 2000; Riddell and Tett, 2001; Tett *et al*, 2003; Wildridge *et al*, 2004) indicate that the following factors are important:

- The aims and purposes of the need for collaboration are identified at the beginning and should be shared by all partners;
- Collaborating organisations are stable and are not going through major organisational changes;

- The financial and resource expectations of all partners are made explicit at the start;
- Partners agree the degree of independence and interdependence at the start;
- Staff at all levels within the collaborating organisations need to be committed to making it work;
- Individual participants should have networking and interpersonal skills to help facilitate the partnership – they should not have a particular *'axe to grind.'*

(Jones, 2000; Wilson and Pirrie, 2000)

3.10 Conclusion

This research project will see whether in terms of curriculum development these factors are seen as significant determinants of success, whether there are other factors impacting on the process and whether there is a model for good practice for partnerships to follow. The following two chapters will explain how the research was designed to investigate the research questions and produce the evidence which enabled the issues raised in this chapter about the nature of collaborative work to develop undergraduate curriculum to be explored.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research was a collective case study of collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level taking place on multiple sites and involving a range of stakeholders. It employed a predominantly qualitative methodology, involving documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire survey. Two undergraduate programmes in each of three HEIs provided the context and the data was analysed with the assistance of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (Nvivo).

The research aimed to fill a gap in studies of collaborative relationships in curriculum development. Previous studies (see for example Tett *et al* 2001; Tett *et al*, 2003; Wildridge *et al*, 2004) focused on partnerships for different purposes such as community education or in different contexts such as health. A qualitative study was appropriate in order to understand the processes involved in curriculum development, the interactions between the partner organisations and the impact that these, and current policy initiatives, had on the process of development.

The paradigm that underpins this research assumes a relativist ontology i.e. that there are multiple realities which may be constructed locally and specifically. It follows a subjectivist epistemology that the knower and the respondent co-create understandings and the findings are presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory (described in Chapter 5). The study focuses on understanding the nature of collaborative partnership vicariously and reconstructing the processes through in-depth interviews, documentary analysis and survey. It recognises that individuals try to make sense of their environment and understand what is going on in the context of sharing their understandings with others. Schwandt (2000) describes it thus:

'Constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience. Furthermore there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth.'
(Schwandt, 2000, p197)

These constructions are investigated here within a community of practice. While individuals represented their institutions in the negotiation process, institutional partnership can only set the strategic framework within which collaboration can occur.

This study of collaborative partnerships is located in the discipline of education drawing strongly on the literature and principles of educational research (Burgess, 1985; Schratz; 1993; Bassey, 1999; Simons and Usher, 2000; Freebody, 2003) which seeks to examine aspects of the social world and the human interactions inherent therein. However, collaborative work is not found solely in educational activity. Sociology, social work and health care (see for example the work of Hudson and Hardy, 2001) are also arenas where collaboration is common and the methodology drew on commonalities with broader social science research (Punch, 1998; Schutt; 1999; Kumar, 1999; Corbetta, 2003).

4.2 The Case for Researching Complex Collaborative Arrangements

The research design – of six programmes in three different types of HEIs – was chosen to reflect the complexity of the collaborative institutional structures which existed and the interrelationships that were needed to develop curriculum in partnership. It was thought that this range of institutions would reveal the critical factors at stake in generating and maintaining the collaborative partnerships. Curriculum development entails a multitude of stages from identification of the need through to implementation and delivery, each incorporating complexity.

In this particular study, there were several levels of complexity. First there was the context of the case – collaborative partnerships with two or more partners from HE, FE and business. Secondly, there was complexity within the individual institutional settings. Each organisation is the sum of its structure, culture and processes (O'Neill, 1994) and also its history which may impact on how it reacts to change. Bowe *et al* (1992) contend that studies often ignore the historical context and thus fail to recognise that educational change in institutions is like a palimpsest where the stories have been written over and over again; elements of past histories blurring the current picture. Thirdly there is the complexity of multiple innovation both nationally (the response to multiple policies) and institutionally. Changes within organisations seldom occur singly; multiple innovation (sometimes even innovation overload) is the norm. In times of rapid political, social and economic development, innovation and change happens on many fronts at once and in quick succession. Identification of any causal links is difficult therefore. However it is possible to trace the interrelationships between the partners and the processes within the particular cultural settings and the effects these had on the development. Fourthly, there is the complexity stemming from the range and number of different perspectives investigated in the study.

The research methodology needed to be able to capture this complexity, peeling away the different layers to get to the nub of the issues.

Qualitative research is better able to penetrate to this kind of understanding - it is interpretative, idiographic and holistic, aspiring to uncover the subtleties of meaning in any one context (Eisner, 1979b; Mertens, D. 1998; Freebody, 2003).

4.3 The Case for Qualitative Research Methodology

In the history of educational research two very different epistemological views are evident (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Those who favour an objectivist approach believe in a positivist epistemology that there is an

external reality that can be known. They believe that facts are waiting to be discovered and researchers are able, through applying their methodology, to discover general principles and laws about the social world. Human behaviour is seen as being largely determined by external environmental factors that can be measured and quantified. The subjectivist approach, on the contrary, takes the view that knowledge must be gained through subjective experience. It requires an idiographic methodology which emphasises *'the particular and individual behaviour'* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p7). Human beings are seen as voluntaristic i.e. the initiators of their own actions. Educational research has drawn from both of these epistemological positions using quantitative methodology in the first and qualitative in the second.

The research questions (detailed in Section 4.4.1) focused on how the main players in the collaborative arrangements perceived and responded to developments as they unfolded. People are the main subjects and the use of qualitative methodology enhances the possibility of *'capturing'* the unpredictability of people; *'bound to human caprices'* (Burns, 1994, p120). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define qualitative research as:

'... a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. ... This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.'

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p3)

As this quotation indicates, qualitative research is usually multi-method in focus (Flick, 1998) aiming to gain a depth of understanding of the subject through multiple perspectives. There are two underlying premises in the above quotation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p18). Firstly, the researcher must believe that clear observation of the social world is possible and that the experiences of the participants can be adequately recorded.

Secondly, the participants must be able to form a view of the social world and be able to report these experiences. Each of these premises can pose problems as people impose interpretations on situations and colour what they see with their own particular lens:

*'Post-structuralists and postmodernists have contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of- and between- the observer and the observed'.
(Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p19)*

There are numerous advantages of adopting a qualitative approach. Partnership between people, such as the collaborations in this research, is about relationships: how they develop and why they do or don't flourish. The relationship is based on action requiring people to contribute their skills and knowledge to a set of processes if the partnership is to succeed. Blumer (1969) believes that people are deliberate and intentional in their actions: they are creative and make meanings in and through their activities. People's actions are affected by their perception. They interpret events and situations and they act on the basis of these constructs (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Morrison (1998) recounts the famous dictum by Thomas (1928) that if a person believes there is a mouse under the table then s/he will act as if there is a mouse under the table, whether there is or not. Thus, individually constructed realities are an essential part of the research environment. The importance here of discovering how the participants in the curriculum developments interact collaboratively and what makes successful partnerships work indicated that a qualitative approach, allowing exploration of the social reality, should be used.

4.4 Research Design

Kumar defines research design as *'a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately, and*

economically' (Kumar, 1996, p74). There are commonly three different perspectives in the choice of research design: the number of contacts with the study population required; the reference period; and the nature of the investigation (Kumar, 1996). The research questions focussed on the process of collaborative curriculum development: the nature of the partnerships and how they were developed; the barriers that hindered progress; and the benefits that accrued.

This research was designed as a cross-sectional study which took place at one point in time, rather than a longitudinal study following a population or phenomenon over a period of time. A cross-sectional study is suited to taking a snap shot and examining and analysing the phenomenon (in this case collaborative curriculum development) from multiple perspectives at one point in time. Using a qualitative approach, the multiple realities of participants can also be located in the historical contexts and cultures of their institutions.

Various factors influenced the choice of this design. Collaborative curriculum developments at undergraduate level are of many different types: degree or sub-degree level; award-bearing or non-accredited; vocational or academic. An early decision involved the range of programmes that would be investigated in-depth. In order to cover a range, selection was made on the basis of award type. In each institution that formed part of the case study at least one foundation degree was chosen as their design incorporates partnership, and workforce development and widening participation are explicit in their aims. Also, a different type of undergraduate programme in each institution was selected. Given the range of perspectives that needed to be explored, six programmes in total was considered to be a manageable number in the sample (Section 4.4.3).

The design also reflected the pragmatic considerations of time, accessibility (to the institutions and to the development teams) and cost. Manageability is a key factor when setting up the parameters of the

research and this had to be balanced against the complexity of the sites and contexts involved. A collective case study of six undergraduate programmes developed within collaborative partnerships involving three HEIs and their partners seemed an appropriate scale of study to be undertaken by a lone researcher.

The reference period of this case study was largely retrospective and this is a disadvantage of a cross sectional design. The design makes it difficult to measure change over time except by exploring the memory of the participants. The accounts of the participants and the published documentation provided a picture of how the curriculum developments had progressed up to the data collection point. The interviews were based on recall and participant memory and were therefore subject to the accuracy of that memory. Memory is also selective and there is degradation in the quantity and quality of information recalled over time (Corbetta, 2003). Of course some people have better memories than others and some people recall more accurately than others.

These issues of variability in memory were addressed in the design by using several respondents for each programme studied. Different participants will remember different details and where the same detail is remembered by a number of participants there can be greater confidence in the points made. This is not to say that points made by only one respondent are unreliable but should be checked out as far as possible during the data gathering process.

4.4.1 The Key Questions

This section unpicks each of the key questions to reveal the lines of enquiry in the research. Each one revealed subsidiary questions which were used to plan the topics covered during the interviews and the questionnaire.

Key Research Question 1

Why do HEIs, FECs and employers involve themselves in collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level?

The subsidiary questions were:

- How far are different HEIs and their partners engaged in collaborative curriculum developments at undergraduate level?
- What types of programmes are being developed?
- What are the aims of each of the partners in undertaking this type of development?
- Who initiates and leads on these developments?
- How is the development process organised?

Key Research Question 2

How do the barriers to collaborative partnership affect the processes involved in curriculum development in higher education?

Subsidiary questions here included:

- What barriers exist at the start of the process and what barriers emerge as the development progresses?
- What impact do barriers have on the process of curriculum development in time, cost, relationships, mode of working and progress towards a final result?
- Are the same barriers identified by each partner?
- How are conflicts resolved and barriers overcome?
- Are these barriers and problems related to the mode of partnership working or are they inherent in the curriculum development process?

Key Research Question 3

How can the process of collaborative curriculum development be facilitated to encourage the government's policy objectives of widening participation and workforce development?

The subsidiary questions were:

- What are the critical success factors for collaborative curriculum development?
- How can collaborative curriculum development be facilitated?
- How does working collaboratively assist institutions meeting the objective of widening participation and workforce development?

KEY QUESTION 1 was designed to explore the aims and expectations of the different partners and how the collaborative development process was organised. The aim was to investigate the reasons why different groups got involved, what they aimed to get out of the collaboration and what they thought the benefits were.

KEY QUESTION 2 focused on the complexity of the processes, and the conflicts and barriers to collaboration between participants and within institutions. The premise underlying this question is that there are likely to be difficulties and problems which beset the curriculum development process when undertaken collaboratively as suggested by the literature review (Chapter 3).

KEY QUESTION 3 had two main facets: how the process of collaborative curriculum development can be facilitated; and why collaboration is seen as such an important element of achieving government policy objectives. If this mode of working is really to make a difference in terms of widening participation and workforce development, lessons need to be learnt to help build a framework of practice to assist those working in the field. This element aspired to investigate the link between policy and practice.

4.4.2 The Rationale for a Collective Case Study

A collective case study of collaborative curriculum development over multiple sites was chosen as the most appropriate research approach to investigate the research questions and the levels of complexity in the curriculum development process outlined in section 4.2. Case study has been defined as '*... the systematic investigation of a specific instance*' (Nisbet and Watt, 1994, p74). The aim in this study was to explore particular programmes in partnership arrangements where the boundaries were indeed not clear as collaborative development was unfamiliar to many of the participants. The case study approach was a useful vehicle to understand the processes, structures and/or cultures at work in collaborative developments and to generate theoretical and

professional insights. The approach has proved useful in educational research for understanding complex social and educational phenomena for over thirty years and there is a rich literature concerning its use (Kogan, 1984; Yin, 1994; Simons, 1996; Bassey, 1999; Freebody, 2003). Case studies have a number of advantages for this purpose (see for example Nisbet and Watt, 1984; Adelman et al, 1984; Johnson, 1994; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Freebody, 2003).

First, case studies can capture the uniqueness of situations and contexts which might be lost in larger scale studies, and this can hold the key to understanding processes more fully (Simons, 1980). Case studies focus on real situations and their *'embeddedness in social truth...allows attention to the subtleties and complexities of a case'* (Adelman, et al, 1980, p23). Secondly, they allow the researcher to investigate complex realities and the dynamics of human interaction and relationships; in particular to focus on the subtleties that may allow deeper understanding. Thirdly, with the range of techniques they can employ (Johnson, 1994, p 20), case studies can examine the problem from a variety of perspectives and report in accessible language (Adelman *et al*, 1980; Johnson, 1994).

One of the main concerns with using case study that has been raised is the difficulty of generalising from a single case. Johnson (1994), for instance, has pointed out that, as an approach, case study cannot claim the full generalisability that quantitative methods can provide, but nevertheless it does have relatability (Bassey, 1981). However this is only a weakness if the expectation is that it should be possible to generalise in the same way as for quantitative studies. Stake (1978) points out that there is a major difference between the kind of generalisation it is possible to claim from a case study and from that of a survey for instance. He proposes a form of *'naturalistic generalisation'* as opposed to formal *'propositional generalisation'* possible in survey and experimental studies.

There is also sometimes a concern over possible lack of rigour in the methods and processes of case study. However, several authors have

pointed out that case study has its own rigour and systematic processes of exploration (Simons, 1980; Nisbet and Watt, 1984). As Freebody has noted of qualitative research:

'...I do not regard the qualitative educational researcher as engaged in an activity somehow less 'objective', 'empirical' or 'rigorous' than any other researcher in any other discipline. Indeed, because of the diversity and fluidity of cultural practice, the onus on the qualitative educational researcher is to be, compared with other kinds of researchers, ...more objective...more empirical, ... and ...more rigorous.'
(Freebody, 2003, p69-70)

The kind of generalisation I was able to pursue in this study was facilitated by the adoption of a collective case study design. It allowed me both to examine what was particular to each of the specific cases and to explore the benefits and barriers to the curriculum development process the cases had in common. These similarities were further analysed through theoretical frameworks developed from observations in the field. This is the approach used here and is described in more detail in Chapter 5. The conceptual framework is then tested iteratively with more observations (Schutt, 1999).

There is considerable variation in the literature about what constitutes a 'case'. Freebody (2003) suggests that a key question to be asked is; *'what is this a case of?'* (p82). The case in this thesis is a collective case study of collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level. Stake (2000) has developed a typology of case studies and he distinguishes between *'intrinsic'* case study (where the researcher is interested in the case itself rather than any generalisation), *'instrumental'* case study (where the researcher is studying some phenomenon, issue or general thing) and *'collective'* case study. He describes collective case study thus:

'It is instrumental study extended to several cases. Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest some common characteristic...They are chosen because

it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases.'
(Stake, 2000, p437)

The collective case study conducted in this thesis used multiple sites and a dimensional, purposive sample (section 4.4.3) to explore the processes involved in collaboration and partnership work in curriculum development. Three institutional sites across the HE sector were selected reflecting different types of institutions and six curriculum programmes were selected reflecting different kinds of undergraduate programmes. This design allowed the phenomenon, the case of collaborative curriculum development, to be explored in a variety of settings and to generate insights about the processes and issues which influence partnership in action in curriculum development at undergraduate level.

4.4.3 Developing a Sampling Frame

Chapter 3 identified the diversity that exists in HE and this was dealt with by choosing sites across the sector, including three very different types of institutions: the pre -1992 institutions (also known as the 'old' universities); the post -1992 institutions (the 'new' universities) and the university colleges. The institutions were selected for both their physical accessibility and the access to the key respondents. The HEIs are all located in southern England although the partners are spread across the UK. Pen-portraits of the nature of these HEIs were included in Chapter 1.

To be able to understand the nature of partnerships, the undergraduate programmes selected also needed to provide an opportunity to study multi-partner collaborative relationships. Each programme involved the HEI working with at least one other educational establishment, and directly or indirectly with employers. In order to broaden the study, the sample included three foundation degrees and three other undergraduate programmes. The criteria for selecting the specific programmes are shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Criteria for selection of programmes in the study

<p>The programmes studied must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an award at undergraduate level • Be fully validated • Have students currently on the programme at all levels • Have as an aim (explicit or implicit) either widening participation and/or workforce development • Have been developed in partnership, either directly or indirectly, with at least one other organisation • Only involve a maximum of one foundation degree in any one institution • Provide access for the researcher to all of the sectors within the partnership involved in the collaboration
--

Figure 4.2 shows the range of institutions, partners and aims of the programmes sampled. Clearly, this selection has been made as a purposive sample due to the need to target particular characteristics.

Figure 4.2 Purposive and dimensional sampling frame for the collaborative curriculum developments

	Programme	Widening Participation aim	Workforce Development aim	Partners
Old University	Foundation Degree (<i>Fd Arts Working with Children</i>)	Yes	Yes	HE/ FE/ National, regional and local employers
	Cert HE/ DipHE (<i>Dip HE Canine Assistance Studies</i>)	Partly	Yes	HE/National employers
New University	Foundation Degree (<i>Fd Arts Early Childhood Education</i>)	Yes	Yes	HE/ FE/ National, regional and local employers
	HND (<i>HND Business</i>)	Yes	No	HE/FE/Examination Board (EdExcel) with employer involvement
University College	BA/Foundation Degree (<i>BA/Fd Arts Child and Youth Studies</i>)	Yes	Yes	HE/FE/ National, regional and local employers
	Advanced Certificate (<i>CAES Education (post-compulsory)</i>)	Yes	Yes	HE/FE/Local and regional employers

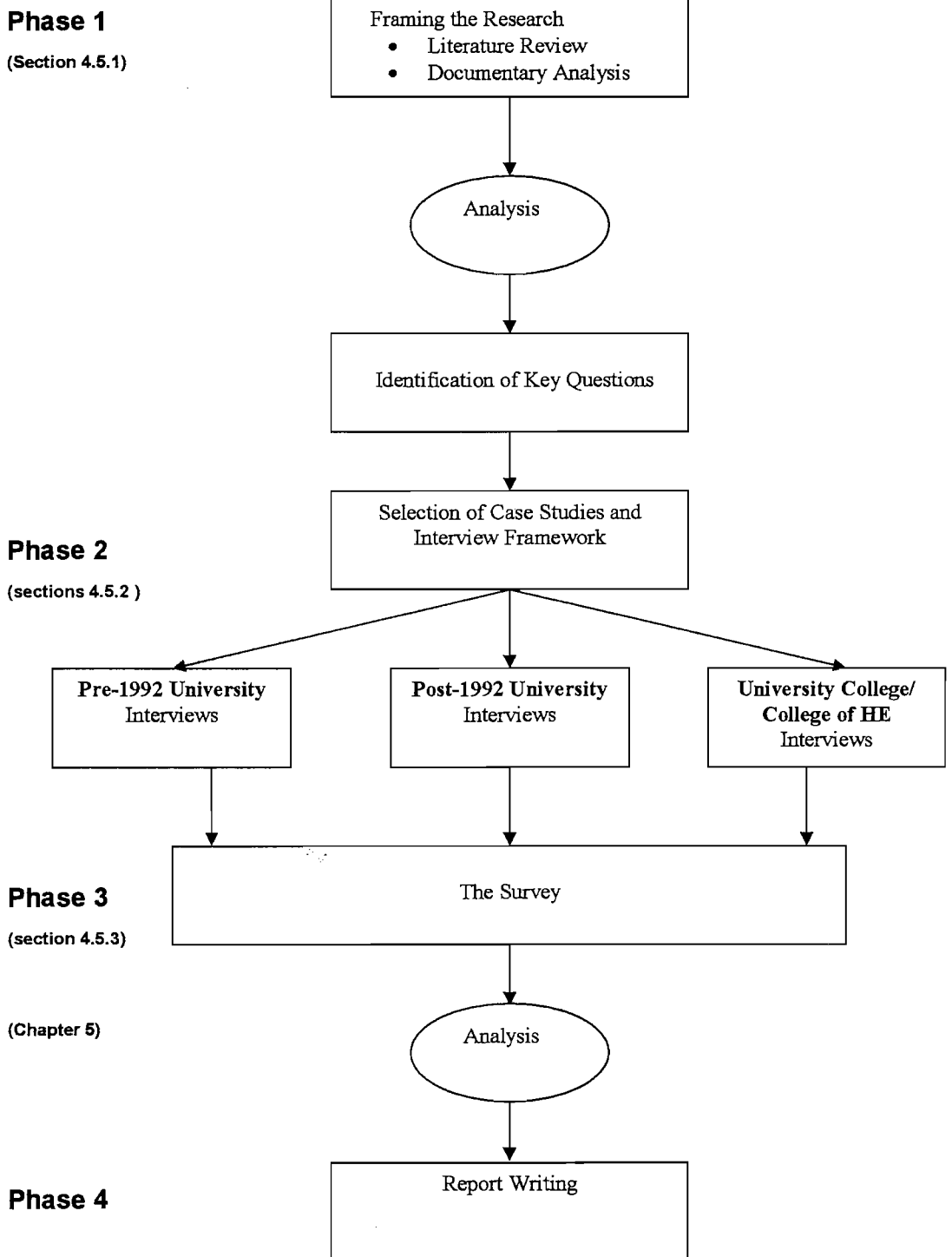
However, to be more representative than purposive sampling allows, the sample was also dimensional: each programme satisfied the criteria of being representative of the sector (three classes: 'old' university; 'new' university or university college); having a relevant undergraduate programme developed collaboratively (two classes: foundation degree and other programme); and being engaged with a government policy directive (two classes: widening participation and/or workforce development). The resultant group of programmes thus reflected the sector as a whole, were within manageable travel distance, had been engaged in collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level, and were happy to provide access.

4.5 Phases of the Research

The research was conducted in a number of phases summarised in Figure 4.3 in broad terms through a path analysis, a technique well-established in educational research (e.g. Davidson, 1970; Hoinville and Jowell, 1978). The phases were broadly sequential but clearly some of the actual activities occurred in parallel. At the end of each phase there was an opportunity to pause and reflect on the research direction and to modify the next phase in the light of experience.

Phase 1 was the initial stage of investigating the literature and key documentary evidence including official reports, strategic documents, validation materials and minutes of meetings of collaborative curriculum developments. This helped frame the research questions. The initial documentary analysis showed that the processes to be understood would require an in-depth study of partnership formation, the nature of the relationships, the processes which operated and the (overt and covert) outcomes which resulted.

Figure 4.3 Key phases of the research



Phase 2 involved the development of the principal research instruments. The study took three institutions and, at each of these, representatives from the programmes, together with senior staff from the University, the other education partners, and business, were interviewed. The interview instruments were piloted and amended in the light of experience before the study began. The original sampling frame included a total of 34 participants.

Phase 3 included the introduction of a survey as it became obvious early on that, in order to make best use of the interviewing time, there was a set of information that could be gained more simply by using a questionnaire. These were given out to all interviewees to provide some quantitative data about the institutions and their collaborative programmes. It also provided specific detail about the barriers and facilitators for collaborative work to triangulate the information gleaned from the interviews.

Phase 4 involved the transcribing of the data (including member checking) and the analysis of the data (described in Chapter 5). The final analysis and conclusions were based on data gained in all stages.

Such pathway analysis may seem too structured for a qualitative study and Bryman and Burgess argue that it is wrong to think of research stages but to consider it as a *'dynamic process'* which links the *'problems, theories and methods'* (1994, p2). In a quantitative study the processes of data collection and analysis are two distinct phases occurring one after the other. In a qualitative study, these *'do not follow the same inflexible order, but intersect and overlap'* (Corbetta, 2003, p233). Thus:

'...the research process is not a clear cut sequence of procedures following a neat pattern, but a messy interaction between the conceptual and empirical world, deduction and induction occurring at the same time.'

(Bechhofer, 1974, p73, quoted in Bryman and Burgess, 1994)

However, although it was neither possible nor desirable to collect and analyse the data sequentially in this study, the qualitative process still needed to be conceived and organised systematically. The pathway analysis provided such a conceptual structure.

4.5.1 The Documentary Analysis

'Every recognizable human activity in our society produces documents. Modern society is a society that documents itself continuously; there is no institutional act or socially organized activity that does not leave behind some documentary trace.'
(Corbetta, 2003, p306)

Collaborative curriculum development is no exception. In this research, documentary analysis provided information both in terms of background and contextual information and as a means of triangulating data from primary research.

'A document is any material that provides information on a given social phenomenon and which exists independently of the researcher's actions' (Corbetta, 2003, p287). The documents explored were of two types. Primary sources were provided through an analysis of, for example, validation documents, programme board minutes, letters and memoranda of agreements specifically prepared as part of the curriculum development (Figure 4.4), and documents and government papers detailing official policy. Figure 4.4 shows the documents consulted for each of the programmes in this research.

In educational research, primary documents provide a rich source of information and a paper trail and allow the researcher to delve into the agreed record of events as they happened. Modern QA procedures are prolific in the generation of paper. They provided an opportunity to extract information and cross-check with the memory of the individual participants who recount their experience. These primary sources were used to:

- identify whether the programme was a suitable one to study (Figure 4.1);
- develop an understanding of the programme content and structure;
- provide an element of triangulation with the in-depth semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire (see Figure 4.5); and
- provide background detailed information to supplement material from the interviews and the questionnaire survey.

Figure 4.4 Programme documents included in the analysis

Document	Programme 1*	Programme 2*	Programme 3*	Programme 4*	Programme 5*	Programme 6*
Validated document	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Programme Specification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Memorandum of Agreement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Programme Board Minutes	✓	✓				
Student Handbooks	✓	✓		✓		

* Key to the programmes:

1. Foundation Degree Working with Children
2. DipHE Canine Assistance Studies
3. Foundation Degree Early Childhood Education
4. HND Business
5. BA/Foundation Degree Child and Youth Studies
6. Advanced Certificate Education (Post-compulsory)

Clearly the purpose for which these documents were prepared was not to aid the research but to provide an official record of the events. However, as Corbetta (2003) points out, this offers two distinct advantages. Firstly, the information that can be gleaned from the documents is non-reactive, unlike an interview where the interaction between the participant and the researcher may distort the information or colour it in some way. Secondly,

it provides a historical record documented at the time and does not suffer from the erosion of time that can affect human memory.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) support the use of such documents as a useful addition to other qualitative data and as having the advantages of being low cost and factual. However, with any written document the information has passed through the filter of the writer and may suffer from a lack of objectivity or misrepresentation (Schutt, 1999). The documents used here had the advantage of having been through some process of 'acceptance' by a group (for example the group agreeing minutes of a meeting) and therefore have some degree of internal validity.

Secondary sources were also used in the development of the literature review conducted at the early preparatory stage. As Travers (1969) observed this is an important stage for the researcher as it allows the study to be located in the context of previous work and assists in identifying and refining the research questions to be investigated.

4.5.2 Undertaking the Interviews

In order to research the complexity of collaboration, a method was needed which would allow the views of those involved to be gathered and to reconstruct their stories. Qualitative interviewing is a common method for this purpose (Wragg, 1984; Bell, 1987; Johnson, 1994). As Michael Patton has described:

*'The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to understand how the subjects studied see the world, to learn **their** terminology and judgements, and to capture the complexities of **their** individual perceptions and experiences....The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express **their own** understandings in their known terms.'*

(Patton, 1990, p290, original emphasis)

This research was exploratory: trying to uncover from the participants the nature of the process, the factors that acted as barriers and those that facilitated the process. The use of interviews put participants at the centre and allowed the story to be told from their perspective. The emphasis comes from those being interviewed rather than from systematic closed questions developed as part of a questionnaire, where the respondent can only answer in a fixed way and is not allowed to qualify the answer. In the interview *'the dominant voice is that of the respondent'* (Corbetta, 2003, p266).

There are three principal modes of interviewing and the advantages and disadvantages of each are well documented (for example, Drever, 1995; Seidman, 1998; Kumar, 1999; Corbetta, 2003). One of the principal advantages is that in an interview rich data and in-depth insights can be gathered (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The participants also tend to become more involved with the research and more personally motivated (Oppenheim, 1992) and this will increase the response rate. Interviews also provide more opportunity for seeking clarification from the participants and for probing if interesting views are revealed. These advantages of interviewing were the reason that this was the main method used in this research as the nature of the research questions was predominantly exploratory.

In order to ensure that the scope of the research questions was covered, the semi-structured interview technique was adopted and the broad content of the questions was pre-determined under five headings (see Appendices 2a and 2b):

- **About the interviewee** (principally a locating section which placed the respondent within an organisational role and put the interviewee at ease)
- **About the collaborative curriculum development** (mainly factual material about the nature of the partnership and the

curriculum development but including exploratory questions on the reasons for becoming involved)

- **Barriers to curriculum development** (exploratory questions around barriers to progress, how these were overcome, the nature of any conflict and conflict resolution between the partners)
- **Organisational Structure** (questions on how the development process was organised and managed, the nature of the partnership and the decision-making processes adopted)
- **Benefits of collaborative curriculum development** (a section which allowed the respondents to reflect on the benefits to themselves and their organisation and related the process to government policy).

Questions relating to each of the five areas were identified as a prompt although these did not have to be asked in sequence or at all (Appendix 2a shows the schedule used with senior managers, Appendix 2b shows the one used with members of the curriculum team). This approach ensured the collection of data across all the questions but also allowed for some exploration. Figure 4.5 shows the relationship between the research questions, the documentary analysis, the questions within the interview schedules and the questionnaire.

Interview data may be questioned in terms of its reliability. Cicourel (1964) identified four possible problems. Firstly, the precise outcome of an interview cannot be replicated as it is the product of an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent at a particular time and place. Secondly, there is usually some element of interviewee unease due to the unnatural situation of being in an interview which may lead to the use of avoidance tactics by interviewees. Thirdly, no respondent is likely to tell all they know. This may be for quite innocent reasons such as poor recall, or for political reasons where information is withheld deliberately. Fourthly, even where there is a good rapport between interviewer and interviewee, there may be misunderstanding of the meaning of the

Figure 4.5 Map of the interview schedule questions and questionnaire against research questions

Research Questions	Interviews section 1	Interviews section 2	Interviews section 3	Interviews section 4	Interviews section 5	Documentary Analysis	Questionnaire section 1	Questionnaire section 2	Questionnaire section 3
(a) Engage in collab. curric. dev.?	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
(b) The partners?		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
(c) Types of programme?	✓					✓	✓	✓	
(d) Aims of each partner?		✓							
(e) Initiation and lead of the dev.?		✓						✓	
(f) How is dev. organised?						✓			
(g) Barriers at start and emergent			✓					✓	
(h) Impact of barriers			✓						
(i) Partners perceptions of barriers?			✓						
(j) How are conflicts resolved?			✓			✓			
(k) Nature of barriers?			✓						
(l) Critical success factors?				✓	✓			✓	
(m) How can collab. Be facilitated?				✓					
(n) Collab. cf gov. policy					✓			✓	

questions and/or the answers. These problems have led some researchers (e.g. Cannel and Kahn, 1968) to question the reliability of interviews. By paying close attention to the structure of the questions, piloting them and recording the data, it is possible to improve the reliability (Kitwood, 1977) but by improving the reliability, the validity may be reduced (see sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.4). Adding constraints to the interviews can limit the depth and subtlety of the approach. Validity relates particularly to the interpretation and the analysis of the data collected.

To avoid some of these potential problems the interview transcriptions were checked with the participant concerned and meaning was clarified where necessary. The interview schedule was piloted with three colleagues to ensure that the questioning mode and the clarity of the meaning was understood. There was no requirement to change the questions used as a result but the piloting provided a useful opportunity for me to become familiar and comfortable in undertaking this type of interview. It was at this stage that I decided on the format of the semi-structured interview with five main topics.

The first step in organising the schedule was writing to each of the HEIs to ask permission to undertake the research and involve the partners in the study. In one case, this was made conditional on getting permission from the institution's own ethics committee. In each case the HEI insisted on contact with the partners being made through the programme director or partnership officer. This slowed down the process significantly as I was dependent on the time constraints of a third party in initiating the contact.

The purposive sample of respondents was developed with the assistance of the initial contacts to ensure that the most useful people were approached. Rubin and Rubin (1995, p66) identified three characteristics for informants when using purposive sampling:

- They should be knowledgeable about the topic being studied;

- They should be willing to talk;
- They should represent (or be representative of) the range of views.

These authors also suggest that two other tests should be used to increase the validity of the technique. The researcher should aim for completeness, *'what you hear provides an overall sense of the meaning of a concept, theme or process'* (p72) and saturation, *'you gain confidence that you are learning little that is new from subsequent interview(s)'* (p73). These criteria were used in this research.

The list of respondents developed over time as it became clear which people could provide valuable insights. In each programme the process of interviewing stopped either when all the relevant people had been interviewed or when the interviewing process was not adding new information. The respondents are shown in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6 The sample of respondents interviewed

Role	Old University		New University		College/Institute of HE	
	FdA Working with Children	DipHE Canine Assistance Studies	FdA Early Childhood Education	HND Business	BA / FdA Child and Youth Studies	CAES Education (Post Compulsory)
Course leader	Martin	Ashley	Nigel	Mark	Carol	Jack
Partner Education Institution	Michael Richard	Dean	Pat	Mitchell Carmen	Sarah	Travis
Business Partner	Ernest	Tim Jackie	Eva		Lucy	Travis
Partnership manager	Kate	Simon	Fiona		Colin	
Teacher of HE	Paula Tania	Max	Pat Nigel Pat	Mark	Sarah Carol Lucy Carla	Hilary Jack Travis
Senior manager HE	Neil		Lesley	Lesley Henry	Colin	
Outreach staff	Jane	Patsy	Matt		Carla	

NB Some of the respondents fulfilled more than one role. Total number of respondents:

34

Contact was made with the individual participants by email or letter. An invitation to take part in the research was accompanied by detail about the research (Appendix 3), a sample informed consent form (Appendix 1) and an invitation for a pre-meeting or telephone call to answer any questions. The letter covered aspects of the research such as confidentiality, anonymity, recording of the data and the time commitment required of the respondent. In as many cases as possible, and certainly for all the partner organisation's respondents, this was preceded by an approach by the host HEI contact.

The interviews took place in a convenient location for the respondent, usually their place of work but in a few cases the interview had to be by telephone. The use of the telephone changed the nature of the interview experience. It is unnatural for people to talk for a long time in answer to a question or prompt on the telephone and this was a noticeable difference from the face-to-face interviews. In order to deal with this, more verbal prompts and responses were given in the telephone interviews to reassure the respondent that what they were saying was appropriate and useful. Despite this, the telephone interviews are on the whole shorter than those undertaken face-to-face, and the number of interviews by telephone was kept to a minimum (6/34) All the interviews, including those by telephone, were audio-taped and lasted for between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview followed the topics shown in the interview schedules (Appendices 2a and 2b).

At the end of the interview, each respondent was asked to complete a questionnaire and return it in a stamped addressed envelope. The audiotapes were transcribed by me rather than by a transcribing service so that I could become thoroughly familiar with the text. The transcriptions were then returned to the respondent for checking for accuracy of factual information and meaning. This process also provided an opportunity to check understanding of responses where this was not clear from the audiotape. At the end of the data collection process each respondent was thanked by correspondence or telephone conversation. The interview

transcripts were corrected in the light of any comments made by the respondents and were then imported into the qualitative data handling package *Nvivo*. Additional information gleaned through the checking process was added as memos to the data files for use during the analysis process (see Chapter 5).

4.5.3 Developing the Questionnaire

The survey approach using questionnaires is one which is used widely and is recognised as a quick and efficient means of collecting data. Schutt (1999, p230) defines a survey as the '*...collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions*'. Interviews and questionnaires have different strengths and weaknesses which are well documented in the literature (e.g. Kumar, 1996; Schutt, 1999; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Corbetta, 2003). It is recognised that questionnaires have the advantage over interviews when factual information needs to be collected as they are cheaper and quicker to administer. In this case, they also allowed me to concentrate in the interviews on a broader range of topics and provided more time to gather the perspectives of the respondents. Schutt (1999, p232) summarises their advantages as '*versatility...efficiency... generalizability*'.

It is an efficient instrument but one of the dangers of using a questionnaire is that it may be too easy to ask a barrage of questions (Schutt, 1999). Designing the questions is relatively quick and the danger is that irrelevant or unfocused questions are asked **just in case** the information might be of use. The purpose of the questionnaire must be clear and focused on the research questions it is investigating. In this research the questionnaire was not the main research instrument and provided supplementary and descriptive information to the qualitative interviews. It provided factual information about the programmes relevant to the respondents. In this case a self-administered questionnaire was appropriate as the questions required mainly factual answers which could be provided without the researcher being there. Also, some of the

information required needed to be gathered together by the respondent. The questionnaire was also used to check the reliability of the data from the interviews, particularly in terms of the perceptions of benefits and barriers of collaborative work. Interviewing is a very intensive, time consuming and costly form of data collection. By collecting factual information using the questionnaire, the data from the interviews could be, and was, triangulated to check for its reliability (Section 4.6.4).

Questionnaires can be administered to a large number of people and probability sampling can be used on a representative sample from a large population, thus increasing generalisability of the results. However, in this case study, sampling was not based on probability theory as the method was being used as a supplement to the interviews. All the interviewees were asked to complete the questionnaire and, through the use of code numbers, the return of the questionnaires was checked off and non-returns were followed up. In this way, a high response rate was achieved (31/34 or >91%). The use of non-probability and purposive sampling is often used in studies such as this which are largely exploratory in nature (Schutt, 1999).

Even though care was taken to use tests and checks in gathering the questionnaire data to increase its validity, the sample cannot be said to be representative of the population at large and there is limited scope for generalisation. However, the purpose of the questionnaire was to provide background data and to provide an element of triangulation of the data to increase the validity. The use of the data from the questionnaire is to provide descriptive evidence. This research study does not make use of inferential statistics.

There are many other issues affecting the design and implementation of a good questionnaire survey. Response rates are often low and care must be taken when designing the distribution of the questionnaires to allow for this. In this case, the questionnaires were targeted at respondents who were asked personally if they would take part in the survey. All those who

were interviewed were included so the number of questionnaires was small. The questionnaire was given to them after the interview to maintain the integrity of the interview. All respondents were given a date by which to return it in a stamped addressed envelope. After the due date, they were contacted again to see whether they needed a replacement questionnaire to act as a reminder to complete it.

The questionnaire (Appendix 4) was accompanied by a cover sheet giving a short introduction to the study, instructions on its completion, a statement on confidentiality and details of returning the form. The questions were arranged in three sections:

- **Section 1: The programmes in your institution.** This section aimed to provide an overview of undergraduate collaborative curriculum development in the institution and detail on the level and scale of the activity.
- **Section 2: The main collaborative programme that you work on.** This section explored the nature of the programme, the nature of the collaborative partnership and the barriers and benefits that occurred.
- **Section 3: About you.** This section provided information about the respondent and their role in the organisation.

The questionnaire was piloted with colleagues before being used in the field. Once again, few changes were needed but modifications to precise wording were made to some questions in order to improve clarity. Also, it became clear that not all of the questions were applicable to all of the respondents and the cover sheet was amended accordingly to allow for non-completion of some parts of the form. The method of analysis of the information in the questionnaire is described in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

4.6 Research Design Issues

This section focuses on the issues resulting from the research design. In any research design, there are important matters to consider such as the scale of the study, the validity and reliability of data, and ethical considerations.

4.6.1 The Framework: A Matter of Scale

The research instruments were designed to investigate the processes at each of four scales (Figure 4.7): the individual stakeholder; the programme; the institution; and at a policy scale. As described in the previous section three methods were used to gather the data. The use of semi-structured interviews with the programme team members and senior managers was aimed at investigating the micro-scale i.e. the perspectives of individual stakeholders; the meso-scale i.e. the programme and institutional level; and the macro-scale i.e. the policy scale.

Figure 4.7: The interrelationship between research method and scale

Scale	Individual	Programme	Institution	Policy
Documentary Analysis		✓	✓	✓
Semi-structured interviews	✓	✓	✓	✓
Questionnaires		✓	✓	

The questionnaire provided factual information about the programmes to supplement that which came from the documents, and it also allowed triangulation with the interviews. The questionnaire provided data

principally at the scale of the programme and the institution. The documentary analysis provided information at the programme, institution and the policy scales. This combined approach is not uncommon in educational research and has been used by a number of studies (for example Bush *et al*, 1993).

4.6.2 Validity

Validity is a key concept in all research. Essentially it is to do with whether the research methods actually record what they are believed by the researcher to be recording. It is a concept that can be defined precisely by those undertaking purely quantitative studies but has provided an area of significant debate and disagreement between those who espouse the qualitative paradigm (for example: Maxwell, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Hammersley, 1992; Agar, 1993). Some of these authors have argued that in qualitative research there is a need to replace the idea of validity, which they note stems from a positivist tradition, with that of authenticity (Maxwell, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1989). In an authentic case, the researcher seeks to ensure that all the participants have a voice and share in the telling of the story. Fairness becomes an essential criterion to ensure that all views are represented in the final text and the researcher acts deliberately to avoid marginalisation and exclusion of individuals or their views.

One key element affecting validity is the impact of the researcher on the responses and behaviours of the participants (reactivity) (Lave and Kvale, 1995). Methods of mitigating against this include careful planning of the research to ensure that the participants are reassured about what is going to happen, for the researcher to take time to interact with the participant to put the participant at ease, and to plan the use of the research instruments to avoid introducing bias from the researcher. In addition, it is important for the researcher to be self-reflexive about how far his or her presence has impacted on the responses. This was achieved in this research by careful notes of incidents being recorded at

the time of the interview, with these notes then included as memos in the data analysis package (Nvivo). Furthermore it is important during the analysis to examine critically whether the questions in the interview yielded the data required to answer the research questions. All these methods were employed in this research.

Maxwell (1992) argues that the term 'validity' should be replaced by 'understanding' in qualitative studies i.e. we should seek to understand the multiple perspectives of the participants that are revealed in their accounts. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue that in this way we will be concerned with the validity of the accounts of the participants and the inferences we make from them rather than just the validity of the methods or data.

There are five types of validity in qualitative research: descriptive validity; interpretive validity; theoretical validity; generalizability; and evaluative validity (Maxwell, 1992). The first four are relevant here. Descriptive validity is to do with producing an accurate account that is free from distortion, selection and misrepresentation. In this research, participants were chosen to represent a range of perspectives in order to explore multiple realities (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). Safeguards were employed to ensure descriptive validity including audio-taping and transcribing the interviews, member-checking of transcripts and participant checking of meaning. The ability of the research to capture the meaning of the participants is the interpretive validity i.e. what it means to them (termed 'fidelity' by Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). Theoretical validity is the '*extent to which the research explains the phenomena*' and where '*the constructs are those of all the participants*' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p107). In this study, the use of transcriptions enabled the data to be checked with the participants for accuracy and the analysis to come directly from the participants: to use their experiences in their own words and to develop the coding inductively from these words.

These are all forms of internal validity which is the extent to which the explanations are sustained by the data. It is a function of the accuracy of the data and the confidence that it actually describes what the researcher wanted to describe i.e. its authenticity. In addition to the importance of fairness examined above, Lincoln and Guba (2000) also include the concept of ontological authenticity; the ability of the researcher to take a fresh look at the problems articulated in the research questions and not to be influenced by prior experience. It was recognised early on that this would be an issue here as I had extensive prior experience in collaborative curriculum development. Hammersley (1992) argues that internal validity for qualitative data comes from its plausibility and credibility. In terms of my own values and possible biases I cross-checked the questions used in the data collection with a colleague for bias and used member-checking (respondent validation) of the transcripts.

4.6.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is where the researcher employs a variety of research processes (methods, perspectives, locations etc) in order to check the validity of the research, and it is an accepted way of demonstrating concurrent validity i.e. different methods employed at the same time produce the same results (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). A multi-method approach has a number of advantages. It enables the researcher to gain multiple perspectives and thus increases the possibility of getting sufficient, unambiguous data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Each method will provide supplementary evidence in addition to confirming or contradicting information already gathered. It reduces the problem of bias that might come from over-reliance on a single method (Lin, 1976). In addition, the use of different methods, if they produce similar outcomes, increases the researcher's confidence in the conclusions from the data. One criticism that has been levelled at qualitative researchers is that they tend to rely on a limited range of methods. The use of triangulation can

assist in overcoming this problem of 'method-boundedness' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p113).

Triangulation was built into the research design (Denzin, 1970). Three HEIs were used providing an element of space triangulation i.e. an opportunity to consider the research questions in three different sub-cultures of HE. Different participant groups (participant triangulation) were included and interviews were conducted with staff from HEIs, FECs and employer organisations. Social science research is sometimes criticised for only considering one scale of analysis: the individual, the group or society. Although the resources were limited, the different methods used have enabled the study to draw information from different scales (see Figure 4.7). Smith (1975) asserts that in this way the study becomes more meaningful. Finally, there was methodological triangulation through the use of a case study employing documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

Richardson (1994; 1997; 2000) has argued that triangulation should be replaced in qualitative research by what she calls 'crystalline validity'. She explains, '*...crystals grow, change, alter...Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves*'. Thus it is possible to see the problem or issue from multiple perspectives rather than the 'three' implied by triangulation and thus a deeper understanding is achieved.

'Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of 'validity' (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic, Paradoxically, we know more, and doubt what we know.'
(Richardson, 1997, p92)

In this research validity came from multiplicity: multiple sites, multiple programmes, multiple partners, multiple respondents, multiple methods, in order that a deep understanding of the notion of partnership and collaboration in curriculum development was realised.

4.6.4 Reliability

Reliability is the '*extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions*' (Bell, 1987, pp 50-51). It is a function of replicability: would another researcher produce the same results by undertaking the research again using the same methods or at a different time or with a different set of respondents? There are problems with establishing reliability with qualitative research because the uniqueness (Simons, 1980; Stake 1995) that defines case study research is, by its very nature, unlikely to be repeated (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p332). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) have argued that reliability as replicability in qualitative research can be addressed in several ways such as through inter-rater reliability (not applicable in this study as there was only one researcher).

However, we do not need to attempt to mirror the definition of reliability used in quantitative studies but have confidence in the advantages of rigorous qualitative methodology. Bogdan and Biklen have argued that it is better to strive for accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage in the data rather than uniformity (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). We should accept that there will be variability because we assume that different versions of the same reality exist in the experiences of the participants. In qualitative research we should emphasise the positive aspects of accuracy, authenticity and honesty (Walcott, 1990) rather than reliability. For example, when striving for accuracy in interviews it is important for each participant to understand the question in the same way (Silverman, 1993). Careful piloting allows the wording to be refined to maximise this. Reliability is also an important element of the data analysis, in particular in the coding of qualitative data. Samples of the data were coded by a colleague as well as by the researcher and the results discussed to ensure the inter-rater reliability of developing the codes during the data analysis stage (Chapter 5).

4.6.5 Ethical Considerations

Educational research tends to engage in work with individuals and organisations. Before access was negotiated and permission sought, the ethical aspects of the research were teased out and an ethics protocol was established. Access can never be assumed, however, and may be withheld or withdrawn during the research. This study was designed in accordance with the guidelines set down by the British Educational Research Association (2004) and those of the School of Education, University of Southampton. One of the principal ethical issues tackled in the protocol was securing informed consent of the participants. This also involved securing the consent of the main organisations to allow their staff to be part of the study. A detailed explanation of the research and assurances over the main ethical elements of the study was given in all cases.

In addition to this, the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and their possible impact on privacy were important ones to discuss with participants. The nature of the study was relatively uncontroversial and unlikely to touch upon any particular sensitive topics where the limits of confidentiality would need to be breached. In a small study the degree of anonymity is difficult to manage in such a way that it will assure complete privacy. Names of individuals, organisations and places have been changed to protect privacy but those close to the study are likely to be able to identify their own institution from the descriptors. This was explained in the informed consent letter and again in person. In the event, no-one withdrew from the study on this basis.

The use of the research for publication was included as an issue in the information provided to the individuals and the organisation. It was made explicit that the researcher would be using anonymous quotations from the transcripts in the final report and that information would be used in both the compilation of this thesis and for publication. This was an item for signature on the informed consent permission form (Appendix 1). All

participants were able to see their own individual transcripts and were offered a summary of the research report findings.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research has been framed in terms of its methodology and the methods that have been employed. The case has been made for the adoption of a qualitative approach to gather appropriate and rich data from the participants and the reasons for the use of a collective case study approach have been discussed. The phases of the research have been described and the methods of data collection have been detailed and discussed in relation to the methodological approach. Methodological issues of the scale of study, sampling, validity, triangulation, reliability and the ethical considerations have been explored and the steps taken to deal with these issues have been discussed. Chapter 5 will look at how the data was handled and analysed, in preparation for the discussion chapters.

Chapter 5 The Analysis of the Data

5.1 Introduction

In any research, an important part of the methodology is the data analysis and the strategy for data analysis needs to be planned at the outset. The previous chapter described the methodology that underpins this research and how the methods were used to produce the data. This chapter will consider the methodology of the analysis, the nature of the data, how it was managed and how it was analysed. It will also provide detail on the participants and their characteristics as a group. This is essential underpinning information for the analysis and discussion chapters that follow.

There comes a stage when the researcher is faced with the question: 'What am I going to do with this data?' In qualitative research, this question presents itself as the data begins to accumulate. The qualitative researcher considers at the beginning the most likely data that will be gathered and plans on this basis, but is also flexible to allow for exploration of the themes as they emerge. Data analysis is never an easy process. As Richards has commented:

'Making qualitative data is ridiculously easy. The challenge is not so much making data but rather making useful, valuable data, relevant to the question being asked, and reflecting usefully on the process of research.'

(Richards, 2005, p33)

One of the reasons for choosing a qualitative paradigm for this study was that the research questions were largely exploratory. The aim was to produce rich data reflecting the contexts, stakeholders and participants. The data consists of 'thick descriptions' i.e. detailed, contextualised descriptions, in the own words of the participants, which assist in making

sense of the perceptions and meanings of the participants in the process (Geertz, 1973). Data handling and analysis must be undertaken with care so that this richness is not destroyed in the process of refining the data (Drever, 1995; Seidman, 1998). Indeed the initial part of dealing with qualitative data spawns further data, as memos, reflections and notes record the process of handling the data.

As the analysis is undertaken, the constructs used to make sense of the data and to structure the findings come from the evidence of the participants (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). However, the meaning of the data is hermeneutic i.e. both the participant and the researcher bring meaning to the situation, and it is the role of the researcher to ensure that the understanding which is uncovered is a true reflection of what the participant meant.

However, this is not to say that working with qualitative data should be done unsystematically; it must be done in an ordered way, and choosing appropriate data storing and handling systems is an important step. The process I adopted to store, code and interpret the data was qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software. The use of computers in handling data is discussed in detail in a later section (Section 5.3.2).

5.2 The Nature of the Data

'Data collection' suggests that qualitative data is 'somewhere out there', lying around, and all the researcher has to do is gather it up, collate it and make sense of it through finding relationships and associations. The hermeneutic relationship between the researcher and the data means that the researcher needs to be aware of his or her own role in '*making*' the data and uncovering meaning (Richards, 2005, p37). In order to work efficiently, it was important to consider what types of data were needed and how the quality could be enhanced. Richards suggests that there are five aspects of data making which will improve its quality:

- The records produced should be **accurate** and be a faithful reflection of what took place. In this study the transcription was undertaken by the researcher who had conducted the interview and taken notes at the time. Any inaudible word could be checked against recall and checked with the respondent to produce a transcript that recorded accurately what had been said.
- The data should be **contexted** to give an accurate record of the whole environment of the data making process. For example, a taped interview will only provide the verbal record unless it is given a context. In this case, observations of body language, non-verbal cues, expressions etc were recorded in memos which increased the accuracy of the whole picture. Comment was also made about the interview room, any interruptions and any interactions observed.
- The data should be as detailed as possible and provide **thick description** (Geertz, 1973). For example, incidental events such as laughter, hesitation and significant pauses add to the information and these were recorded.
- The data needs to be **useful**. This is a difficult one as at the start it is difficult to know what will be useful later on. In this case, everything that could possibly be of use was recorded in the early stages of the research. However, as the data record became much fuller, it became more focussed around the nature of the data needed to answer the research questions and extraneous information could be ignored.
- Finally, the data should always be **reflexive**. The researcher must keep in mind that the record belongs to them and, therefore, they are part of the data record. (Richards, 2005, p51). This is an aspect of using less structured interviewing techniques that can be a problem. Fontana and Frey (2000) argue that many studies do not give enough emphasis to reflexivity and conclusions which *'proclaim that the data speak for themselves'* (p661) ignore the role

the researcher has in interpreting the data (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

5.3 Managing the Data

Handling and analysing the data from the documents, the interviews and the questionnaires required different methods. This section describes how this was done and the issues of storing, managing and analysing the data that emerged.

5.3.1 The Documents

The documents are those that were part of the documentary record about the programmes and their development, and they came from a range of primary sources (Section 4.5.1). The records were used to provide contextual detail (see Section 5.5) and to build up a picture of what went on in the partnerships as the programmes were developed. Stake (2000) sees this contextualisation as an essential element of the case study and part of the interpretative work of the researcher in searching out the emic meaning. The documents also provided a way of cross checking factual information with participant memory. They provided source materials and were handled by careful note-taking and using them as reference materials during the report-writing stage.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) see such documents as providing a low cost, factual source of information. Others, however, have warned that documents may not be as objective as they seem (Finnegan, 1996; Cohen *et al*, 2000). In this research the documents had all gone through some kind of authorisation process whether, for example, through validation, committee or audit. However, because of the formal nature of the documents, many of them were written using a template or design (eg memorandum of agreement or programme specification), or had passed through a filtering process (eg minutes agreed by the Chair or validation

document). They were impersonal and, even where conflict was being recorded, used formal coded language that obscured, rather than illuminated, the meaning. For this reason, the documents were not seen as a valuable addition to the inter-personal processes that made up the collaborative relationships. As Atkinson and Coffey explain:

'We should not use documentary sources as surrogates for other kinds of data. We cannot, for instance, learn through records alone how an organization actually operates day-by-day. Equally, we cannot treat records – however "official" – as firm evidence of what they report.'

(Atkinson and Coffey, 1997, p47)

In the light of this, the documents were used as an additional set of literature, specific to the programmes and partners involved. They inform the written report of the project but I have not subjected them to a specific process of textual analysis beyond that of reference material.

5.3.2 The Use of Computers and Software

The use of computer software in managing and analysing qualitative data has been debated hotly both by advocates of, and those hostile to, using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA). The concerns described in the literature (eg Tesch, 1990; Le Compte and Preissle, 1993; Kelle, 1995; Cohen *et al*, 2000; Weitzman, 2000) revolve around the distancing of the researcher from the data by using the computer as an electronic intermediary. The ease of working electronically may make researchers lazy and ready to use shortcuts to formulate conclusions (Lee and Fielding, 1991; Weitzman, 2000). However, there are some advantages in using computers for data handling and analysis. They can increase the speed of searching and recalling data; they can allow data to be analysed; ideas to be tested out; and they can be used in developing theory. However, any researcher using computers to handle and analyse data would do well to heed the old adage 'rubbish in, garbage out'!

The first stage was to decide whether or not CAQDA was going to help. Several packages were considered. The exploratory nature of the research questions meant that the software package chosen would need to be a '*code-based theory building package*' (Weitzman, 2000, p809). There were a number of advantages of using such software that made it appropriate in this case:

- The project generated a number of large data records from the interviews which could be stored, handled and retrieved quickly and easily;
- The software provided a framework for project management and could store the logbook as a record that could be searched and retrieved.
- Memos and data bites could be attached to enhance the fullness of the record.
- The software assisted the coding process (in this case the coding largely came from the records themselves (emic coding), rather than by using pre-determined (etic) categories).
- It assisted data manipulation where multiple assembling and re-assembling, coding and recoding, frequency counting and sorting were required.
- Data could be displayed in table and graphical form and be ported to other software packages.
- The software assisted in the writing the final report.

A number of factors were taken into account in determining which software would be used. ATLAS/ti, Ethnograph and NUD.IST were all considered but Nvivo was chosen because of its ability to assist with coding, retrieving data, undertaking frequency counts and theory building. Other factors were more pragmatic. Nvivo was available on license within the University and there were already a number of researchers using the software who provided a supportive environment.

The choice of the software was just the start. Learning what it can do was an important phase of preparation. The researcher attended a course to have the software demonstrated by an expert in order to reduce the time taken through learning by trial and error. Modern software is also well supported by tutorials both within the software package and on-line. The dangers of the unwary embarking on using unfamiliar software are well documented (Weitzman and Miles, 1995; Weitzman, 2000); the key to success is preparation.

'As Pfaffenberger...points out, it's equally naïve to believe that a program is (a) a neutral technical tool or (b) an overdetermining monster. The issue is understanding a program's properties and presuppositions, and how they can support or constrain your thinking to produce unanticipated effects.'

Weitzman and Miles, 1995, p330)

One of the dangers of using CAQDA is that there is a temptation to take shortcuts afforded by the software, for example, coding whole chunks of texts using the autocoder without checking what has been coded and whether it is a sensible outcome. Lee and Fielding (1991) have warned that:

'There is the possibility that the use of computers may tempt qualitative researchers into 'quick and dirty' research with its attendant danger of premature theoretical closure.' (p8)

The project was set up in Nvivo for the first transcription. A project log was formed to provide a record of the data management and analysis stages. Word processed transcripts were imported as rich text format (RTF) files, along with respondent details. The log provided a useful place for creating an audit trail of the data management process, and thoughts, comments and additional material were added through the memoing function. The software proved to be a very useful framework for managing the project but was not the only means of working with the data

used. For some thought processes, nothing beats a pencil and paper. The key to good analysis is using appropriate tools for appropriate jobs.

5.3.3 Analysis of the Interviews

In total, there were 34 interviews that each took between an hour and an hour and a half to conduct. The audiotapes were transcribed in their entirety including instances of hesitation, pausing, repetition, interruption and laughter. The process of transcription can introduce inaccuracies. By transcribing the tapes, it was easier for the researcher to understand parts of the tapes that were inaudible or unclear. It also provided an opportunity to become more familiar with the material in the interviews and was a valuable part of the process of uncovering the meaning. In addition, notes taken during the interview could be added to the datafile as a memo.

Transcribing the whole interview was important early on when the researcher was not familiar with the sorts of points that would be made and their relevance to the research questions. It became increasingly less important as the project neared data saturation point. This is the point at which diminishing returns have set in and very little new is coming up (Schutt, 1999; Richards, 2005). Of course saturation alone is a poor test of when to stop interviewing and Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that it should be accompanied by a decision about '*completeness*' and that the researcher should continue until, '*What you hear provides an overall sense of the meaning of a concept, theme, or process*' (p72).

Full transcription also avoided the problem of '*transcriber selectivity*' described by Kvale (1996, p163) and Lee (1993). This is a problem even where the whole interview is transcribed and memoed as some detail will be lost in the abstraction from the social encounter (Cohen *et al*, 2000), but the problem is so much worse if the researcher then selects what will be transcribed and allows some-one else to type it up.

Selectivity is an important issue as any research involves selection: the researcher selects what needs to be found out to answer the questions and which parts of the data help in understanding the processes under study. It is important that this is considered and recorded in the project log as instances of reflexivity. It is an interesting reflection that in a study of collaboration, the process of qualitative research is also a collaboration between the researcher and those individuals who participate.

Once the interviews had been imported into Nvivo, details about the respondents were recorded and linked to the datafiles. Information about their personal details was recorded under 'Properties' providing biographical and administrative detail. An anonymised example is shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Respondent 'properties' detail

Reference Number: HA0617 Code Name: Tim
Mr Employer, Employer Organisation, Address.
Telephone: 0123 456 7890 Mobile: 07243 123456 Email: Tim.Employer@employers.com
Post: Head of Education Role: Employer Tim has a national role for education and training for the organisation. He has ambitions to develop an international profile for the organisation. Interview undertaken by telephone because of his location in XXXX.

In addition, their 'Attributes' were recorded which were descriptors about each respondent that might be useful in identifying particular outcomes against respondent attributes. For example, an outcome such as the importance of trust in building a collaborative relationship might be more important to female rather than male respondents, or teachers rather than

employers. The recorded attributes are shown in Figure 5.2, and Figure 5.3 shows one such record.

In addition, a separate spreadsheet record called the 'Interview Log' was maintained to track the process through its various stages. This is shown in Appendix 5 and was a very useful project management tool. Details were recorded on each respondent in terms of their name, pseudonym, ID number, date of sending the informed consent letter, date of receiving it back, date of interview, date the questionnaire was issued, any reminder, return date, date the transcript was agreed, and the 'thank you' record. Once the data collection gets underway management of the process is an important part of the housekeeping and good record-keeping allows progress to be tracked efficiently.

Figure 5.2 The respondent attributes data

Attribute	Value 1	Value 2	Value 3	Value 4	Value 5	Value 6	Value 7
Age	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+		
Course Leader	True	False					
Gender	Male	Female					
Name of Programme	Education Post-compulsory	Canine Assistance Studies	Working with Children	Youth Work	Child and Youth Studies	Early Years	Business
Programme level	HND	DipHE	Foundation Degree (Fd)	Advanced Certificate	BA		
Role	Senior Manager	Employer	Middle Manager	Administrator	HE Teacher		
Sector	HE	FE	Public sector employer	Private sector employer	Voluntary sector employer		

NB: All attributes had the following values as choices as well: Unassigned; Unknown; and Not applicable.

Once the interviews had been read thoroughly and early thoughts had been recorded as notes and memos, sometimes referred to as *taking off* (Richards, 2005, p70), the process of coding began. This was undertaken in parallel with the data collection. Coding is seen as an important tool for

reducing the data to more manageable proportions (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Cohen *et al*, 2000) and was found to be an aid in focusing the interviews on what was needed to answer the research questions and to

Figure 5.3 Attribute record for Tim

Age	51-60
Course Leader	F
Gender	M
Name of Programme	Canine Assistance Studies
Programme Level	DipHE
Role	Employer
Sector	Voluntary sector employer

form ideas about analysis. As Richards has pointed out, qualitative coding is different from coding in quantitative analysis in that it is about understanding the patterns that are emerging from the data rather than reducing the data to more abstract forms (Richards, 2005, p86). The raw data is retained alongside the coding and the parts of the text coded in each category can be pulled out and examined for patterns and meaning, allowing the researcher to examine the data from multiple perspectives.

Coding can be used in a number of different ways (Charmaz, 2000; Cohen *et al*, 2000; Richards, 2005). The interviews were coded in two ways. Firstly each interview was coded using the main themes of the interview schedule. These related to the research questions and were based on the five themes of the interviews themselves. All interviews covered these topics – they show the structured element of the ‘semi-structured’ interviews. These high level topic areas were:

- About the interviewee
- About the collaborative curriculum development
- Barriers encountered
- Overcoming the barriers
- Benefits of collaborative curriculum development

The coding is organised in a hierarchy of levels in Nvivo and the higher level categories (nodes) are sub-divided into further sub-categories like a tree with branches (Appendix 6). The coding led to four high level coded nodes:

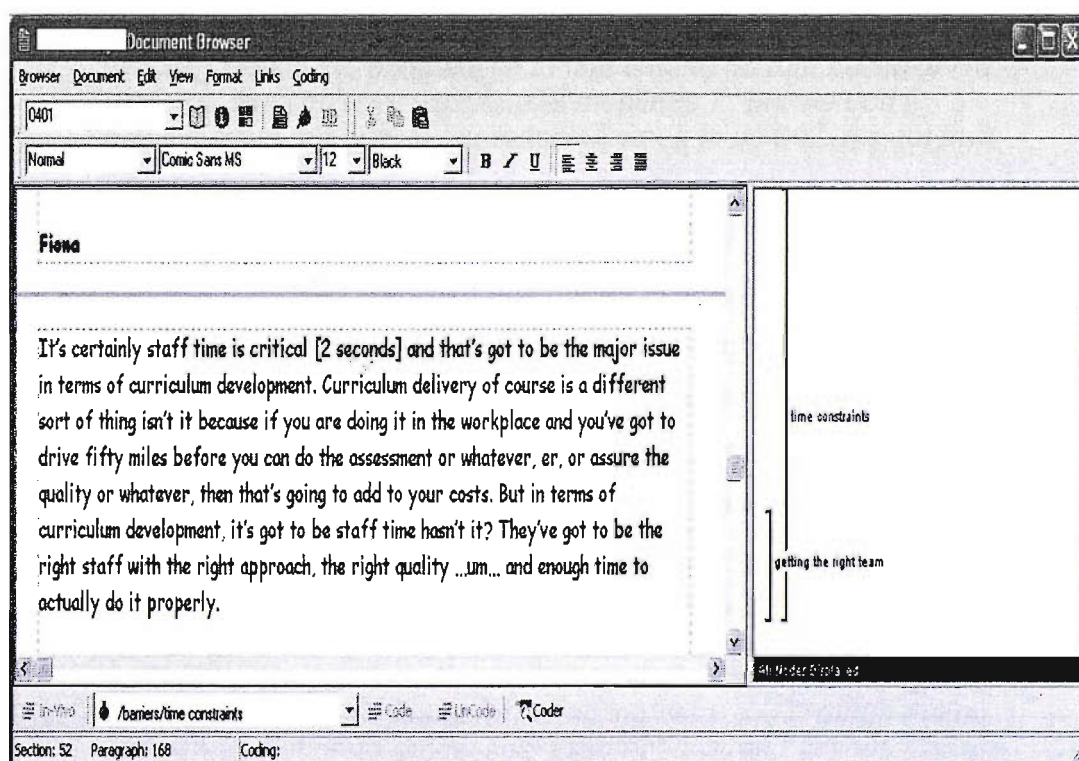
- Partners
- Barriers
- Overcoming barriers
- Benefits

Each of these then contained nodes at a lower level which came from the data itself. For example, in the higher level category 'partners', there were six lower level nodes: employers; FECs; professional bodies; HEIs; voluntary organisations; students. These then could be further sub-divided. Any categories or nodes that did not fit into the tree structure were kept separate as free nodes (Appendix 6). As the coding built up, many of these free nodes did become assigned to the trees as they too developed. However, the use of free nodes meant that a category was not forced into the structure for convenience - it could be 'parked' until it became sensible to link it into the hierarchical structure.

The exploratory nature of the research lent itself to the use of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Bryman and Burgess, 1994) which is discussed further in section 5.3.4. Glaser and Strauss have called this approach the '*discovery of theory from data*' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p1). Apart from the top level codes, an open coding approach was adopted to develop codes at the lower levels. These codes were analytical and related to the detail of the processes that were being explored. For example, codes were assigned to instances, opinions, processes, factors, things of importance to the respondents and so on. Wherever possible the actual words from an interview were used to produce an '*in vivo*' code i.e. in the respondent's own words.

For example, in one interview, the respondent talked about companies and employers with a global sphere of influence needing to take account of their local communities and networks. He used the phrase *'think global, act local'* to illustrate the benefit of local collaboration being important for organisations that seek global influence. This code, **'think global, act local'** has been elicited from the data itself and became one of the codes. Such *emic* approaches keep close to the data and guard against the researcher applying arbitrary categorisation (Cohen *et al*, 2000, p139). Any particular passage of text is considered from a variety of stances and is then coded accordingly. One passage may be coded several times to elicit the meaning and the possible relevance to helping answer the research questions (Figure 5.4 and Appendix 7).

Figure 5.4 An example of a coded passage from an interview



As the data began to increase and the coding developed, it was necessary to revisit the codes to decide whether the initial coding was too coarse or too fine to reflect what the data was revealing. This was also an

essential part of the analytical process and was formative in deciding how to analyse the interviews. The project log was used to track the meaning behind the coding. For example, one of the nodes, under 'barriers', was 'time constraints' which could have a number of meanings. It could mean the time constraints imposed by the validation process or of the academic year in programme development and so on. In fact, in this case, it covered the time constraints of the participants involved to engage in curriculum development because of the demands of their other tasks. In the project log, this is recorded as:

Time constraint 'of the participants in curriculum development processes'

In the coded interview, it identifies passages such as:

'I mean I'd like to be more personally involved myself but it's quite difficult from an FE perspective to find time to do that because I'm sure that we'd be very welcome at meetings ... but we don't actually have the time in our teaching week to do that. It's not built into our timetable....'

Sarah, FE Lecturer, UC. (39:110)

As the coding developed and the ideas began to crystallise, memo writing became an important task. Memos are an essential tool in the process of analysing the data and they consist of notes, ideas, reflections and comments on the data which capture the thought processes of the researcher. Charmaz describes the importance of memoing thus:

'Memo writing is the intermediate step between coding and the first draft of the complete analysis. This step helps to spark our thinking and encourages us to look at our data and codes in new ways. It can help us to define leads for collecting data Through memo writing, we elaborate processes, assumptions, and actions that are subsumed under our codes. Memo writing leads us to explore our codes; Thus our codes take on substance as well as a structure for sorting the data.'

(Charmaz, 2000, p517)

This description demonstrates the integral nature of qualitative research and the interaction between the parts of the process. It is a staged process, but the stages are not linear. Each part of the inductive process is blended in with other activities, and revisited frequently. This is the nature of grounded theory method described in the next section. Coding and memo writing are fundamental parts of this process and provide the '*intermediate step*' described by Charmaz in the quotation.

5.3.4 Developing the Ideas through Grounded Theory Method

The process of coding and using the data's structure as it developed to browse the nodes provided valuable opportunities to develop ideas. This research used grounded theory to work with the data and develop understanding. The data forming is an integral part of the data analysis stage. The interviews themselves cannot be seen as a completely separate process from the development of the themes and theoretical frameworks. Ideas will begin to form early on and these can then be explored and pursued in subsequent interviews. In qualitative research using grounded methods, the theory is developed continually through interaction with the data (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The theoretical ideas are 'grounded' in the data i.e. they come directly from the data (Schutt, 1999). The process was inductive – data categorisation gradually changing as the ideas were refined. The theory emerged from the data as early ideas were supported or rejected with further observations and instances (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Huberman and Miles, 1994; Schutt, 1999).

There is some debate around the nature of grounded theory with positions varying between the protagonists. For example, a positivist stance is taken by Glaser (1978, 1992) who assumes that there is an objective, external reality to be discovered by the neutral researcher. This follows the gathering and reduction of the data, data analysis and the development of theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) take this further beyond a positivist position by arguing that the participants should be

given a voice. The process of working with the data should also include ways of verifying that the participants' views are reflected accurately and that reflexivity is acknowledged. Charmaz (2000) argues for a constructivist approach to grounded theory which stresses the emergent nature of the process and uses the flexibility of heuristic strategies to uncover the multiple realities of the participants. She goes on to say that this is a less rigid and prescriptive way of approaching grounded theory and, by focusing on meaning, interpretation and understanding is enhanced (Charmaz, 2000, p 510).

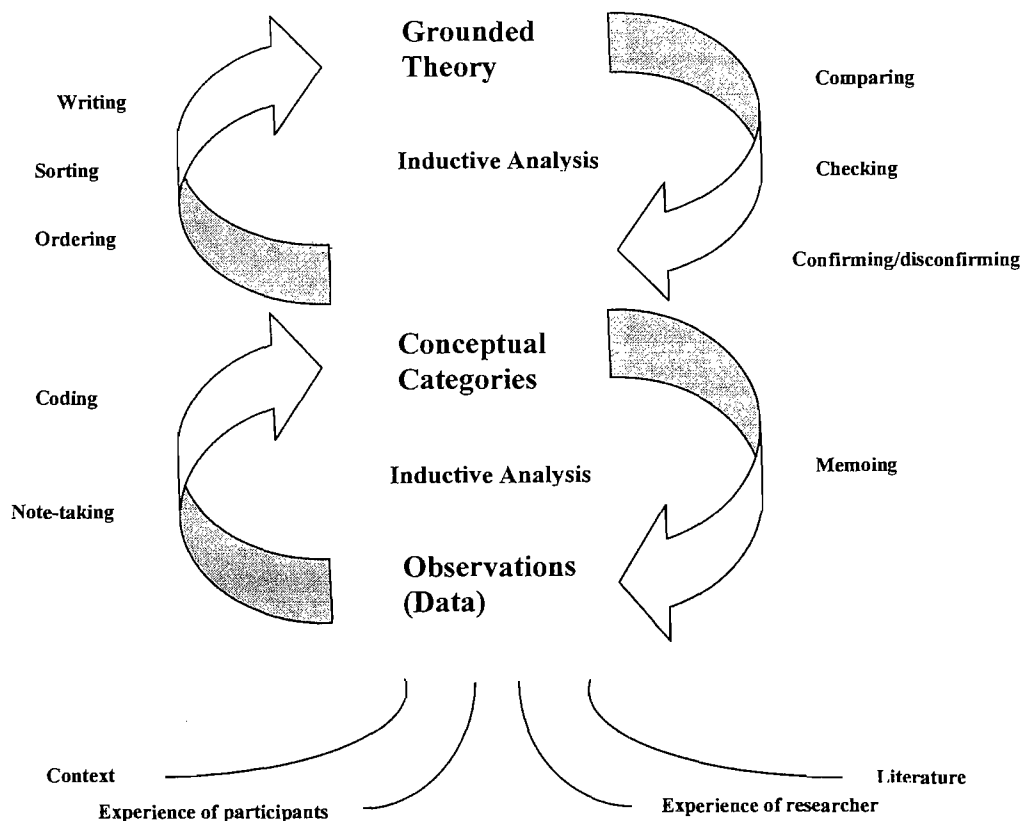
The use of grounded theory here involved the use of a number of strategies, several of which were employed in parallel. Data making and analysis occurred simultaneously as the data was created through undertaking the interviews. As part of this process, notes were made on the contextual detail to capture the wider reality. The data was then coded through a two stage process: firstly coding by topic and then analytical coding to uncover the meaning given to the data by the respondents. The data was then interrogated through careful reading and memo-writing to begin the process of conceptual analysis and developing theory. This final stage was also a staged process involving both the emergence of a theoretical framework from the data and then back-checking of the data for instances which challenged the theoretical stance and contradicted the main thesis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Schutt, 1999; Charmaz, 2000).

LeCompte and Preissle also advocate constant comparison with other examples of the phenomena, across instances, times and locations, as well as inductive category coding within the data, so that the research can be situated in a broader social context (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p256). Adopting this approach the theoretical proposition emerged from the data by using a range of inductive methods. It involved constant evaluation and careful checking as the concepts and theoretical frameworks emerged. This is shown diagrammatically below (Figure 5.5).

As the process of developing theory progresses two things are likely to be identified. Firstly, it is likely that there will be gaps in the data which need to be filled in order to shed confirming or disconfirming light on the emerging theory. At this point in the process it might be necessary to employ theoretical sampling to target data to fill the gaps (Charmaz, 2000) which in turn may require a return to the field. Secondly, disconfirming data might be found i.e. data that does not fit with the emerging theory. Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p72) argue that the method should involve deliberately seeking disconfirming data as part of the analytic induction. In this way the emerging theory can be modified to explain these instances or the theory-making process may need to start afresh.

Figure 5.5 The emergence of grounded theory

(based on work by Glaser, 1978; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993; Schutt, 1999; Charmaz, 2000)



Making discoveries from the data and the emergence of theory is the result of active interventions. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that good practitioners of grounded theory method will have the ability to stand back and analyse critically. They will be able to think abstractly and recognise bias. They will be flexible, sensitive to the respondents and open to criticism, and they will be absorbed by the research work (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p7). Literally they will be fully engaged with the process of data making and data interpretation. In this research, theory was crafted using diverse techniques. The precise techniques employed in each part of the analysis are described in detail in the next three chapters. The goal is to produce theory that is '*accessible, understandable*' and '*derived from, and justified by*' the data (Richards, 2005, p129). Each final conclusion started as one of many, or parts of several, which were examined in the light of the data. A tally of confirming and disconfirming cases gradually whittled these down to the theory which explained the data best. Glaser and Strauss described the essential characteristics of good theory-making in the following passage taken from *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*:

'Theory in sociology is a strategy for handling data in research, providing modes of conceptualisation for describing and explaining. The theory should provide clear enough categories and hypotheses so that the crucial ones can be verified in present and future research; The theory must also be readily understandable to sociologists of any viewpoint, to students and to significant laymen. Theory that can meet these requirements must fit the situation being researched and work when put into use.'
(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p3)

They go on to explain that by '*fit*' they mean that categories must not be forcibly applied to the data and that they must be relevant to the processes being studied and assist in the explanation. This approach to data analysis and theory building was followed in this research.

5.4 Analysis of the Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire was designed to gather factual data about the partnerships and the respondents' roles in the collaborations. Questions were also asked about the relative importance of factors affecting partnerships from a wide range of sources in the literature. The analysis of the questionnaire data followed the recognised procedures for dealing with data of this sort (for example Kumar, 1996; Schutt, 1999; Cohen *et al*, 2000). The first stage of the analysis was to edit the data which involved checking its accuracy, identifying and rectifying any errors made by the respondents and checking for any clerical errors. The straightforward nature of the questions in the questionnaire made this stage a simple checking task.

The second phase is usually developing a code book and coding the data. In this questionnaire, the number of responses was very small and the data could be handled from each form individually. Tallying the responses was completed simply and the data was then inputted into an Excel spreadsheet. The descriptive data provided background data and was graphed and is displayed and analysed later in this chapter (section 5.5). Responses to open questions were coded and used as part of the data analysis alongside the interview data. This is described in detail in the analysis chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

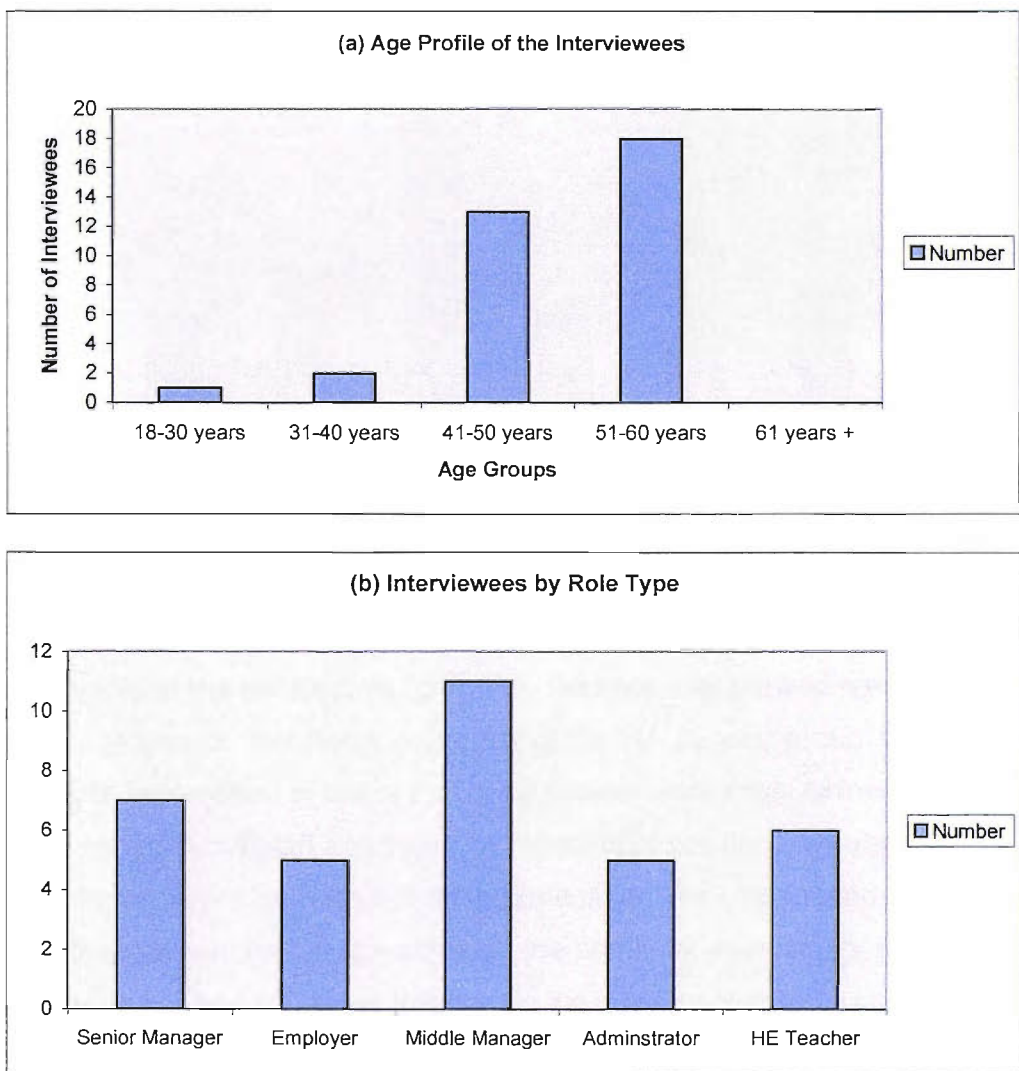
5.5 Descriptive Data Analysis from the Questionnaires and Interviewee Attributes

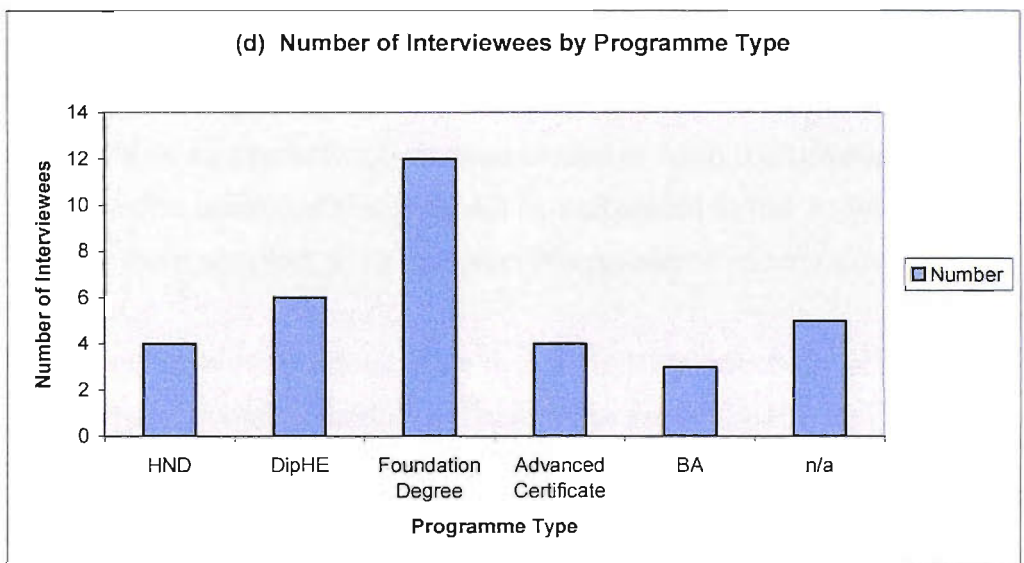
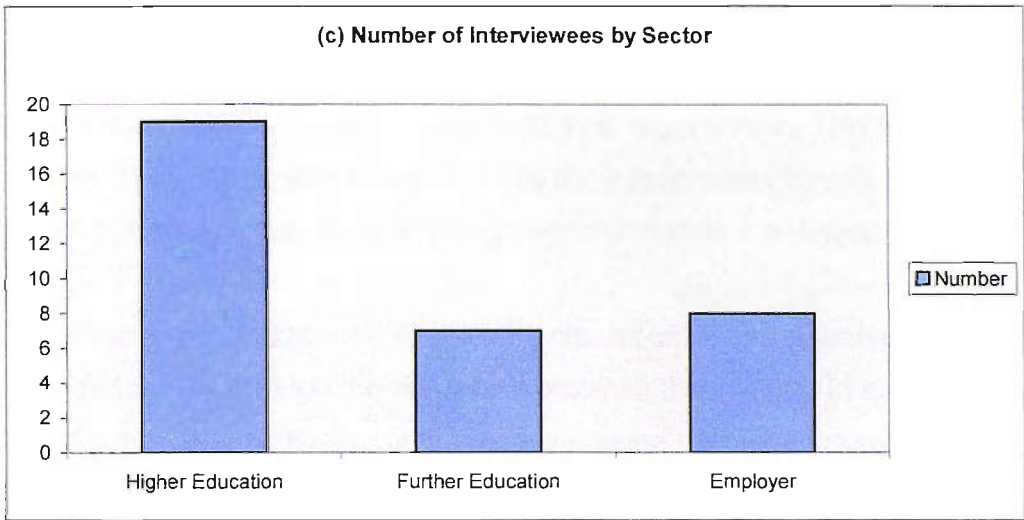
This section contains details taken from the data analysis of the participants in the interviews and the results from the questionnaires. It provides an overview of the context. This overarching data analysis is included here as part of the context, and not in the later analysis chapters which consider the research questions in detail, as it underpins the whole case study. In order that the analysis was approached cautiously, the

researcher needed to know both about the participants individually and about the total group. These characteristics assisted in understanding the results that emerged, as the data had itself emerged from the participants.

The questionnaires and the descriptive coding of the respondents through Nvivo provided profile data of the participants in the research. The graphs in Figure 5.6 show the attributes of the participants and provide a picture of the characteristics of the group as a whole. There were equal numbers

Figure 5.6 Profile of the interviewees





of men and women interviewed. The profiles show that in terms of the age profile of the participants (graph a), the data was skewed towards the older age groups; the modal group being the 51 - 60 year group. One possible explanation of this is that collaborative work tends to involve more experienced staff and those, in managerial positions, who are able to make decisions on behalf of the organisation. The explanation is likely to differ between the sectors although the profile for each sector was similar. In HE and FE, those involved in the delivery of collaborative curriculum tended to be experienced staff. The types of staff involved included programme managers or those providing central support for the programme, and those in middle and senior management positions. In

terms of the employers, those involved in collaborations were individuals who were experienced and had delegated authority to make decisions about resources and funding on behalf of their organisation. This bias towards more senior staff is borne out by the interviewees by role type (graph b) with a high proportion being senior or middle managers (18/34).

The sectoral bias is towards HE participants. All of the programmes are managed for QA through the HEI which provides the awards. In each case the curriculum development process and the partnerships are led by the HEIs. The delivery locations are also accredited by the HEIs. Therefore, when seeking informed individuals to interview about the collaborative partnerships, the participants were skewed towards HEIs. This dominance of the process by the HEIs, even where they did not set out to lead, is an interesting factor and proved to bring both problems and benefits to the collaborations. This will be elaborated further in the following three chapters which consider the research outcomes in detail.

Another factor in this predominance is that the HEIs effectively acted as gate-keepers. In each situation, the conditions set by the HEI for researcher access was that the contact with partners was made by HEI staff in the first instance. This had the advantage of assisting in gaining access to other partners and increasing the trust in the process from the start. However, there are disadvantages. It also meant that there was a bias towards those partners with a positive experience. One HEI was willing to recognise this problem and tried to arrange meetings with a partner FEC which had not had a good experience of partnership. However, the FEC staff were unwilling to take part in the interviews despite a number of separate approaches. This problem of bias towards participants with a positive experience was countered in two ways: by reassuring the participants about confidentiality – that any negative comment would not ‘get back to’ the other partners involved; and by specifically asking interviewees about barriers and difficulties experienced during the process. The nature of the programmes involved meant that the respondents were knowledgeable about the research process and the

need for full disclosure, and the processes of collecting, storing and using the data were explained to ensure that a full picture of the collaboration was obtained. Nevertheless, this sectoral bias is one that must be kept in mind as the data analysis and conclusions are made.

The respondents are also skewed towards those with experience of foundation degree collaborations (12/34). The timing of the research was such that the most recent major development of collaborative programmes was of foundation degrees. Indeed it was one of the reasons that this was an interesting and relevant research topic. In order to get a broader perspective, in each HEI no more than one foundation degree was used.

Detailed information about the programmes was drawn from the questionnaire returns (summarised in Figure 5.7). The table shows that the partnerships vary in size and complexity but that they all include an HEI, at least one other educational partner and employer input. The size in terms of student numbers ranges from 16 (HND Business) to over 1000 (Advanced Certificate). The partnerships were initiated mainly by employers and/or the HEIs. In one case, the partnership was initiated by the FECs (HND Business) and this was specifically to diversify into HE work. In all cases the partnership was led by the HEI, although there was joint leadership with the employer who also delivered the programme in one case (Canine Assistance Studies).

The pattern of teaching varied between the partnerships. In no case did the HEI provide all the teaching. The most common mode was delivery by a partner (employer organisation or FEC). In several instances the HEI contributed to the teaching (Canine Assistance Studies, Education (Post-compulsory) and Child and Youth Studies). In one programme, Working with Children, certificate level was delivered in the FECs and workplace, and intermediate level in the HEI and workplace. Three programmes had explicit, credit bearing work-based learning (WBL) (Canine Assistance Studies, Education (Post-compulsory) and Working with Children). Three

Figure 5.7 Programme detail from the questionnaires

Programme	Canine Assistance Studies	Working with Children	Business	Early Years	Education (Post-compulsory)	Child and Youth Studies
Awards	DipHE CertHE	FdArts CertHE	HND	FdArts CertHE	Advanced CertHE	BA FdArts CertHE
Partners	HEI 1 Voluntary Sector Employer	HEI 3 FECs 4 Public Sector Employers	HEI 3FECs EdExcel	HEI 1FEC 1 Private training College	HEI 7 FECs (the FECs are also the employers)	HEI 2 FECs 2 Public Sector Employers
Initiated by	Employer	Employer and HEI	FECs	HEI	HEI	Employer
Led by	Employer and HEI	HEI	HEI	HEI and partners	HEI	HEI
First year of recruitment	2001/02	2002/03	1998	2003/04	1995 2001 last validation	2000/01
Target total for 2003/4	19 (12FTEs) Part time	104 (68 FTEs) Part time	16 FTEs. Full time.	15 FTEs Part time and full time	Approx 1000 Part time	700 Part time
Pattern of teaching	100% Work-based. Input by HEI (5%)	44% HEI; 38% FEC; 18% work-based learning	100% FEC	100% FEC and Private College	100% in FEC with 25% HEI teaching. Some WBL.	Varies. HEI:FEC 50:50; 25:75; 0:100
Widening participation	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Workforce development	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nature of collaborative agreement	Memorandum of Agreement	Memorandum of Agreement	Verbal understanding Formal contract has expired. Renewal delayed	Formal Written Agreement	Memorandum of Agreement	Memorandum of Agreement

of the programmes had been developed specifically as widening participation programmes and five had been set up as workforce development programmes. In both the old university and the university college, the partnerships were governed by a Memorandum of Agreement. In the new university, the arrangements were more variable. In the Business programme, only a verbal agreement was in existence whereas in the Early Years programme a formal written agreement existed.

5.6 Structure of the Analysis and Discussion Chapters

This chapter has considered the methodology of the analysis and has put this into the context of the nature of the programmes and the respondents. In the next three chapters, more detailed analysis and discussion will be undertaken in relation to the research questions. The aims of the participants and their institutions are analysed and discussed in chapter 6. The analysis demonstrates how each stakeholder has a different perspective of the partnership benefits and how this can vary from programme to programme, across the HE sector and at different levels within the organisations.

Chapter 7 examines the barriers to forming effective partnerships for curriculum development of undergraduate programmes. The barriers identified through the interviews are used to develop a model that existed in this collective case study and discussion examines the impact these had on the collaborative processes.

In Chapter 8 the analysis focuses on how the partnerships overcame the barriers and how the conflicts that arose were dealt with. Important lessons can be learned from this experience and the analysis enables us to move towards a model of effective partnership and implications for policy and practice which are revealed finally in Chapter 9.

Chapter 6 Perception of Partnership Benefits

6.1 Introduction

One of the questions that underpin this research asks why HEIs, FECs and employers involve themselves in collaborative curriculum development. As the next chapter will demonstrate, working in partnership is not easy and the difficulties, unless overcome, may threaten the viability of the enterprise altogether. The literature points to a number of commonalities in the benefits and barriers associated with partnership work (see Geddes, 1997; Appelbee, 1998; Gilchrist, 1998; Hughes and Carmichael, 1998; Machell, 1999; Jones, 2000; Tett *et al*, 2001; Clegg and McNulty, 2002; Tett *et al*, 2003). In order that partners persist with collaboration, they need to believe that the benefits are of value and outweigh the problems. This chapter considers the aims that the participants had for undertaking collaborative curriculum development and of the perceived benefits they thought partnership brought for themselves, their institutions and their students.

6.2 The Analysis of the Aims for the Programmes

Data on the programme aims came from two sources. The programme documentation contains statements of the aims agreed through discussion and which had undergone ratification by the awarding university. Although this was the partnerships' formal position in articulating their aims, the participants were also asked about the aims they had themselves. Their answers were explored to tease out why they had got involved with the partnership and what they had wanted to achieve. The **Explore Nodes** utility in Nvivo allowed detailed analysis of the aims by programme and by participant.

At the outset, each participant has aims that they wish to achieve. Other researchers of collaborative partnerships have found that a critical success factor is a clear articulation of aims by participants and convergence of the aims towards a common purpose (Field, 1995; Jones, 2000; Tett *et al*, 2001; Clegg and McNulty, 2002). This research confirmed that the strategic aims are usually agreed and subscribed to by all partners and stated publicly in programme documentation. This clarity of purpose is important for securing the participants' commitment to provide the resources necessary to undertake the development. Figure 6.1 shows these aims for the programmes in this research taken from the official documents.

These stated aims may vary to some extent between the participants but overall they are subscribed to by the whole development team. An example of the variation that may exist can be shown by reference to the Canine Assistance Studies programme. In this example, the aim of the employer was to develop their existing in-house training programme for Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMLs) into a recognised HE qualification. The stated aim of the employer partner included in validation documentation was:

- [The organisation] *has three main aims in this development:*
- *To train staff to a high professional and academic level;*
 - *To involve other canine assistance trainers in developing international standards;*
 - *To provide progression for their CPD programme.'*
- (Validation document, 2002)

Old University also had explicit aims as it was keen to increase its part time numbers and to attract students who had hitherto been excluded from HE. This was also described in the validated document:

'This programme development specifically addresses the mission and strategy of [the Faculty]...by providing lifelong learning opportunities, developing part-time provision and working in

partnership with employers to address community needs. It is part of the strategy of the University that [the Faculty] should develop partnerships with employers and community-based groups in pursuit of widening participation and lifelong learning.'
(Validation Document, 2002)

These initial aims reflected the mission of the institutions, and related to the influence of government policy on the HEI and to workforce modernisation needs of the employer. The difference in aims was made explicit in the formal documentation and was agreed by both partners. Analysis of the data indicated the mission-related nature of the aims was something that all the programmes had in common; they all make reference to training for a professional purpose and to progression in HE or employment.

Workforce development, professional development and progression all appeared as aims recalled during the interviews as being agreed by all partners (Figure 6.2). However, there are additional aims, which the participants agreed were made explicit at the start but which were not included in the official documentation. Two such aims are common to the majority of programmes: delivering or complying with government policy, and widening participation. Compliance with government policy was mentioned by those working in education, particularly by those in HE. The reasons given for this largely centred on the fear that, by not engaging, there would be some financial penalty to the institution or departmental group and that the government would impose its political will through differential funding mechanisms. An illustration of this fear is shown in the following quotation:

'I think as far as the Business School was concerned, it was a mixture of wanting to be seen to do something with local FE Colleges, because it was recognised that that kind of collaboration was going to be, if not a government priority, at least some sort of requirement, ... and ... there may have been fears that if we didn't do something then we would in some way... suffer financially.'
Mark, Programme Director, New University (NU) (50:146)

Figure 6.1 Stated aims for programmes in this study

Programme Aims					
Fd Working with Children Old University	DipHE Canine Assistance Studies Old University	Fd Early Years New University	HND Business New University	Fd Child and Youth Studies University College	Advanced Certificate Education (post-compulsory) University College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further your learning and career development • Develop students professionally • Train students to work as Senior Practitioners in the Early Years Sector • Develop the skills of evidence based practice • Provide progression to QTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff to a high professional and academic level • To involve other canine assistance trainers in developing international standards • To provide progression for the CPD programme • Lifelong learning and widening participation • Develop partnerships • Develop part time provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To train people to work in Early Years settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in employment • To provide progression onto an undergraduate degree • To facilitate entry to the BA Business and Management degree at New University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide students with an opportunity to develop their professional understanding, knowledge and key skills whilst working in an education/child care setting • To widen access into higher education • To enhance career prospects for those working with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet the needs of teachers in further and/or adult education and trainers in industry, commerce and the public sector • To provide practitioners with a qualification that meets the FENTO standards • To provide progression to further qualifications at Bachelors, Masters or Doctoral level as appropriate • To enhance knowledge, skills and professional attributes • To enable students to become effective, critical and thoughtful Post-Compulsory teachers and trainers

Widening participation was also an initial aim mentioned by most participants. It featured in the interviews in five of the six programmes, yet it was only mentioned explicitly in the official documentation of two. A reason for this absence may be that foundation degrees were a government initiative which had, as part of their explicit aims, the need to widen participation. Thus it may have been taken as read and wasn't included explicitly in the documentation. Also, widening participation tended to be embedded as part of the rationale rather than as part of the aims; maybe reflecting the nature of programme specifications as, in part, marketing documents. The quotation below demonstrates the response of one senior manager to the importance of this type of curriculum development in attracting a more diverse cohort.

[New University] struggles with its widening participation agenda, ...and we are aware that we have to work incredibly hard really to get anywhere near our benchmarks. We're not doing all that well. ... I think some of us have been very keen to see curriculum development, through foundation degrees... as being a way of attracting a different, more diverse group of students than the University seems, on its own, naturally to cater for, if it's left to its own devices.'

Lesley, Senior Manager, NU. (10: 28)

In this passage Lesley identified the importance of benchmarks for recruitment of WP students and the difficulties that HEIs face when trying to change their market mix. She gave this as one of the reasons for collaborating with FE who have been more successful at accessing such students. Another aim which isn't reflected in the aims in the documentation is flexibility of delivery. Partnerships with FE were seen as a way that HE could benefit from the community links that FECs had built up. In order to change the composition of the student body, the HE curriculum had to change in terms of delivery mode as well as content. Flexibility of where, when and how the courses were taught was as important as entry requirements, aspiration raising activity and marketing in attracting those students who had spurned HE in the past. As Fiona described, widening participation was about students accessing HE in different ways:

'So it's about having subject matter and content that's fit for purpose... [and]... about having a delivery which fits in with the lifestyle that the people now need which is probably not going to be three years, full time study away at a University. It's probably going to be anything else and a combination of anything else which is part time, locally-based delivery, possibly evenings, possibly weekends, possibly block sessions, booking a week of your holidays and going away and doing things. It might be distance learning. It might be electronic learning and combinations of those, plus the kind of infrastructure that you need to support those kind of complicated packages of learning.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (12: 32)

These explicit aims are only part of the picture. It is clear from other partnership studies (Jones, 2000; Trim, 2001; Clegg and McNulty, 2002; Foskett, 2003) that the success or failure of the partnership depends as much on the un-stated aims of the partners involved. From careful analysis of the aims it was possible to identify two other groups. Partners were happy to sign up publicly to the more strategic **stated** aims that are shown in Figure 6.1, but there were also **emergent** aims that were revealed slowly as the project developed and trust between the partners grew, but which were not stated at the start. Any partnership needs to be ready to recognise these emergent aims and work with them or it puts itself in jeopardy. Figure 6.2 shows the aims that came from the analysis of the interviews which have been sub-divided into the 'Stated Aims' (which also largely appear in Figure 6.1), 'Emergent Aims' (gradually revealed to the other partners) and 'Un-stated Aims' (which were not revealed to other partners but which were articulated during the interviews). Emergent aims were not so clearly mission-related and tended to reflect the development needs of the institutions. For example, in the HEIs the emergent aims were mainly related to the changing attitudes towards standard practices and increased staff awareness of the market.

The staff development element was also key in the emergent aims of the employer organisation:

'And we were also very keen to develop a more integrated staff approach, to support a more holistic service approach when it came to clients and we had just moved away from a regional structure ... we've gone from a very small number of residential training establishments ..., to a much larger network of locations which would focus on domiciliary training.... It was a new way of working for the technical staff ...so it was felt that training that would come from [the University] would underpin that.'

Tim, Employer, OU. (20: 56)

It is interesting to note that in the case of this programme both organisations involved embarked on major strategic restructuring shortly after validation. Several participants reflected that the need for cultural change and related staff development in the organisation was an important element of the decision to embark on this initiative. The changes would have happened in each of the organisations despite the collaboration. However, the staff who took part were more able to take advantage of the opportunities which occurred as a result of the organisational change. In fact all members from the employer organisation who worked on the development used this experience as a way of developing their career and gaining promoted posts. As Dean explains:

'I think all members of the team would agree ... that ... we have benefited from this hugely ... the then programme leader [name] is now working in Australia doing a similar job with one of the Schools out there and I'm sure that he wouldn't have been in a position to do that job three years ago, although he's got 26 years worth experience working in [this organisation].'

Dean, Employer Course Leader, OU. (36: 104)

In addition to the aims that are revealed, the evidence suggested that each participant may also have a set of aims that it does not articulate to the other partners at all: for example financial security, programme viability, institutional resistance and other sensitive subjects. For the unwary curriculum developer these **un-stated** aims can hijack the process (Foskett, 2003; 2005). As the discussion of the barriers (Chapter 7) shows, an essential part of the collaboration seems to be the

Figure 6.2 Stated, emergent and un-stated aims for programmes in this study (from the interview analysis)

Programme	Stated Aims	Emergent Aims	Un-stated Aims
Fd Working with Children Old University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development • Complying with Government policy • Staff development • Progression • Recruitment and retention of teaching assistants • Widening participation • Providing opportunities for students • Providing professional training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased motivation of staff • Providing qualifications for teaching assistants • Increase the confidence of students • Career development for teaching assistants • Provide local opportunities for students • Provide opportunities for FE staff to teach at HE level • Widen the FE curriculum offer • Tackle elitism in HE • Fulfil the expectation of Statutory bodies such as the TTA and Ofsted • Recruitment of student numbers in FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE to expand into HE provision • Access to skills, expertise and resources of the University • To motivate schools to engage in the process of training TAs • To gain a higher level of resource in FE which could then be used for other courses as well • Increase the status of FE • Develop niche markets • Pressure to hit recruitment targets for students (FE)
DipHE Canine Assistance Studies Old University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development • Progression for students • Qualifications for staff • Widening participation • Develop partnerships • The development of international standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced public relations for employer organisation • Professionalising workforce • Staff development for employers • Provide opportunities for students • Pedagogical development in the employer organisation • Parity of qualifications with the rehabilitation workers • Recruitment and retention of staff • Modernisation of the workforce • Delivering Government policy • Career development for teaching staff in the employer organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial gain for the University • Cost effective teaching • Enhanced reputation of the employer organisation • Cultural change in the employer organisation • Tackle the conservatism in the workplace • To broaden the understanding of education in the employer trainers
Fd Early Years New University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening participation • Progression for students • Workforce development • Career progression for students • Increased flexibility of delivery in HE • Delivering government policy • Widening opportunities for students • Providing transferable qualifications for Early Years staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving WP benchmarks (HE) • Attracting a more diverse client group (HE) • Providing a service to the region (HE) • Providing for students' needs • Broadening people's minds • Tackling elitism (one FE /HE) • Increase employability of students (HE) • Raising status of nursery nurses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify income streams (University) • Demonstrate to the market that we're keeping up with the times (one College) • Enhanced reputation (one college)

Programme	Stated Aims	Emergent Aims	Un-stated Aims
HND Business New University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression for students • Widening participation • Complying with Government policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for staff to teach at HE level (FE) • Association with University colleagues (FE) • Increased student numbers • Pressure of accommodation near to the University • Providing students with opportunities to study near home • Increased funding • Partnership strategy (university) • Reputation in the region (university) • Philanthropy to FE (university) • Staff development (FE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to University resources • Giving students a second chance to get into University • Enhanced motivation for some staff • Frightened of suffering financially if not complying with government policy (university) • Wanting access to the New University brand (one FE college)
Fd Child and Youth Studies University College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening participation • Workforce development • Local provision of HE • Complying with government policy • Recruitment and retention of staff in the Education Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking up the mature student market that had dropped out of the ITE market • Providing opportunities for students • Recruitment of qualified teachers by progression • TTA strategy for diversification • Developing a teaching force that reflects the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploiting an un-tapped market • Ensuring a better ethnic mix for teaching workforce • Ensuring the University College continues to be viewed as a leading edge institution • Develop an articulate voice for teaching assistants • Encourage structural change in the workforce • Progress the skills of the teaching assistants
Advanced Certificate Education (post-compulsory) University College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide qualifications for FE teachers • Fulfil the Statutory Requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff development for FE and Adult Ed staff • Diversify ITE activity in the University College • Provide 'vocational' staff parity with 'academic' staff in FE Colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed basic skills in training • Provide a progression to PGCE

development of trust in the working relationship. The data showed this as a time-consuming process which should be seen as part of a long-term relationship (Trim, 2001; Bottery 2003).

This analysis of the aims provided evidence of a threefold division into stated aims, emergent aims and un-stated aims (Figure 6.3). The stated aims were, on the whole, mission related and there was commitment to them which the participants were happy to articulate and share with each other. They were a demonstration of what the institution believes in and had high moral status. The only one which did not occur explicitly in the documentation, but which most of the participants agreed was a shared aim, was that of complying with government policy. This may be because all participants were aware of the political positioning of education institutions and were willing to share this with each other privately, but included more worthy aims in the public documentation. The following two quotations show how two of the educational partners in the Working with Children programme viewed the importance of delivering government policy as part of their aims:

'... the whole name of the game in education provision is shifting strongly towards collaborative provision. So...it's not quite a matter of survival but I think that, if we are to be credible providers of programmes and training ... in the future, we can only do that working collaboratively, so one of the payoffs is that we can be seen to be working in the way that other organisations and Government wants us to work.'
Neil, Senior Manager, OU. (74: 218)

'There is an assumption by policy makers that it's plain that partnership work is the best thing to do, so we'll do it but there's opportunity costs ... and there's a view that we might have reached a limit now in the partnership model, without it being properly resourced in some way.'
Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU. (26: 90)

Figure 6.3 also shows commonalities between the aims which fall into the **emergent** category and those that fall within the **un-stated** category. The evidence from the data indicated that the emergent aims tended to

Figure 6.3 A model of aims of collaborative curriculum development

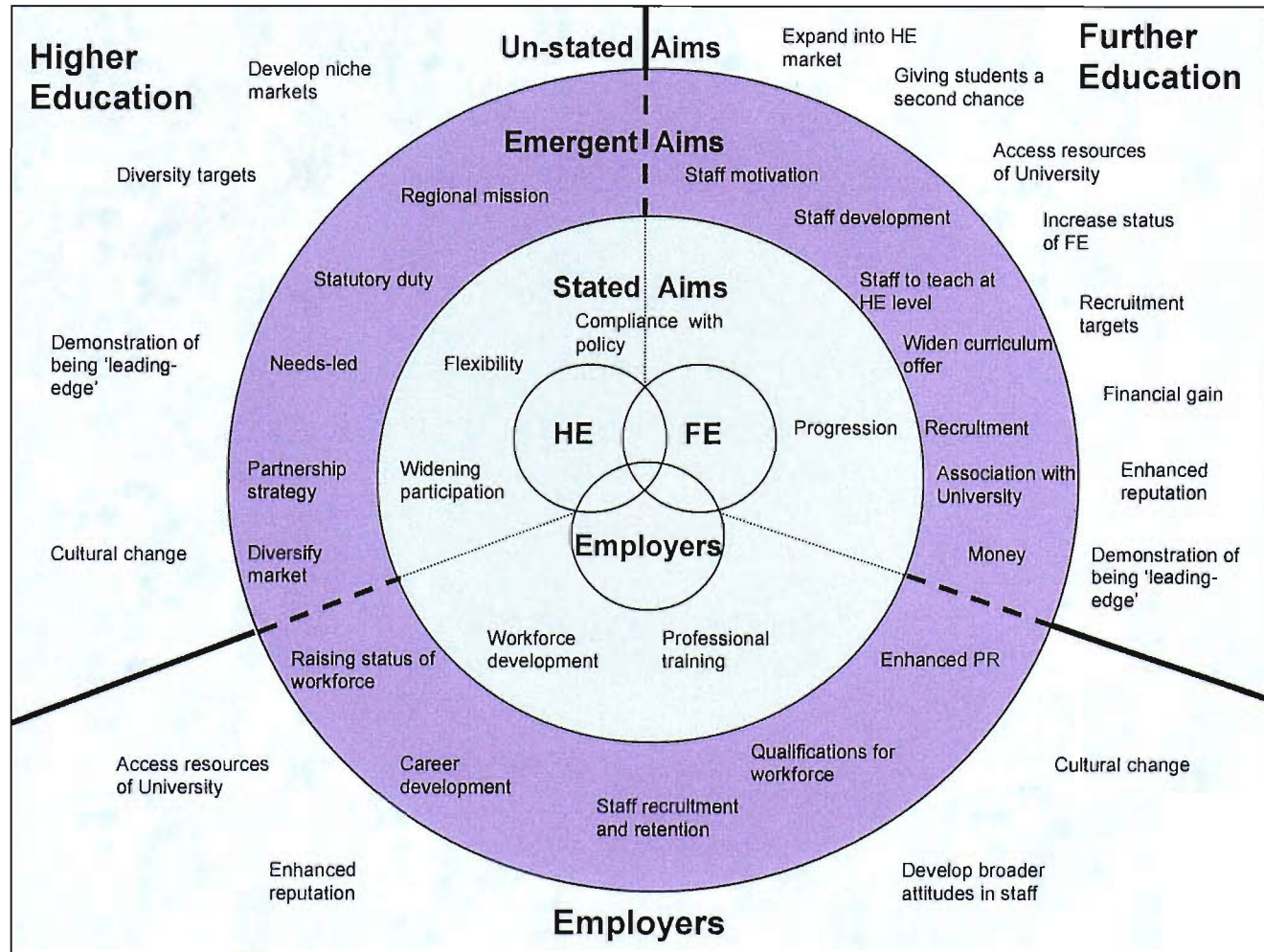
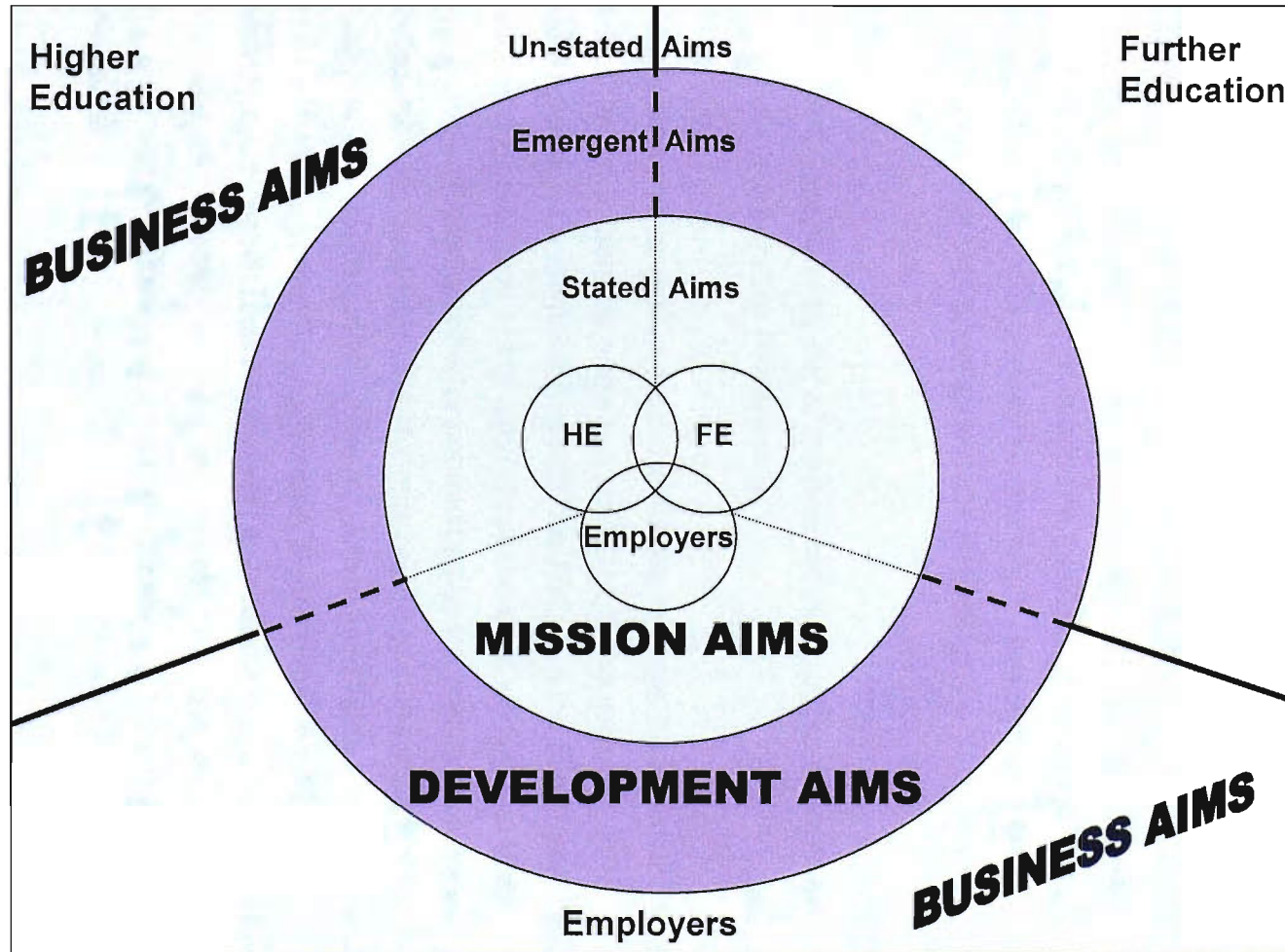


Figure 6.4 Aims of collaborative curriculum development: a generalised model



be those with a developmental motive behind them (eg providing staff development), whereas un-stated aims were more focused on the business drivers of the organisations (eg financial viability, programme viability and recruitment). In each programme, the success of the collaboration, it was hoped, would have an effect on the 'bottom line' of the organisation in terms of financial benefit, competitive advantage or enhanced reputation.

The interview evidence was used to draw up a typology of aims shown conceptually in Figure 6.4 where a threefold division is identified related to the mission, development needs and business imperatives. This typology will be used in the next section which considers in detail the perception of benefits of collaborative partnership.

6.3 A Conceptual Model of Participant Perception of the Benefits of Collaborative Partnership

As people begin to work in collaborative relationships their motivation can be enhanced by benefits becoming apparent. In this research, three beneficiaries were identified (the **HEI**; the **FEC**; and the **Employers**) and each had a perception of the value of collaborative working. To some extent this reflected whether or not each group felt that its aims were being realised. In addition, the students gained from the collaboration. However, the purpose of this research was to investigate the **process** of curriculum development in collaborative partnerships and it did not include direct research on the students as receivers of that curriculum. The students' perspective was therefore not included in this analysis but the staff members' perspective on the student experience is returned to in chapter 9.

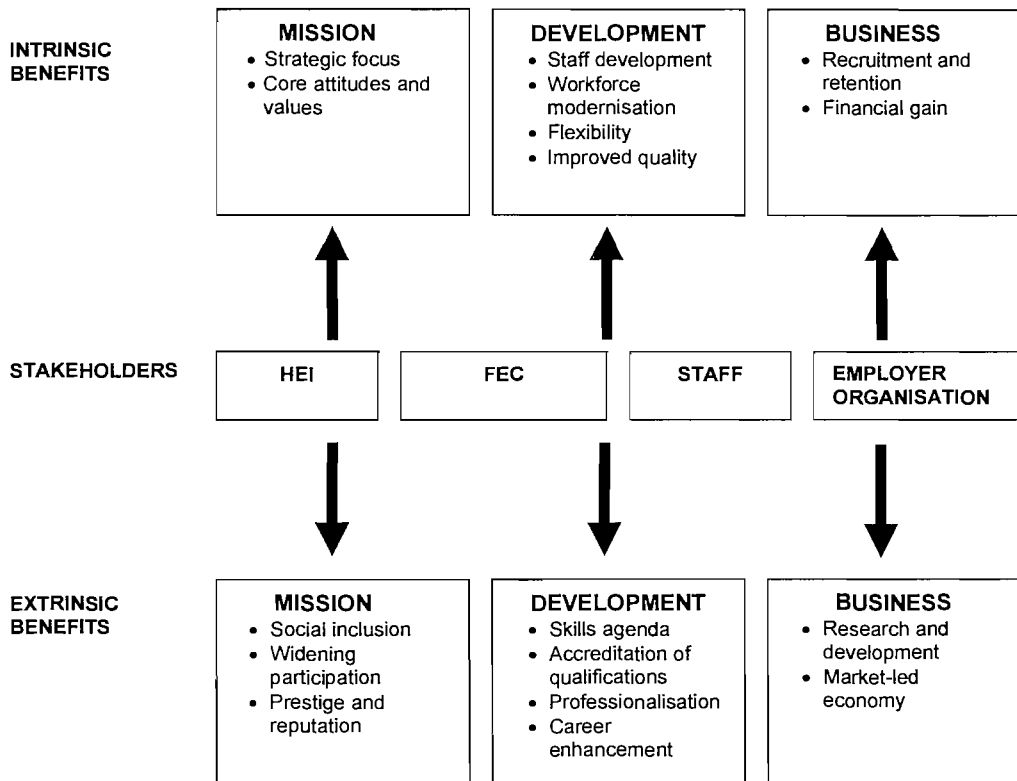
The model (Figure 6.5) was developed from an examination of the perception of benefits by the participants. A full list of benefits was collated and divided into those accruing to each stakeholder. Further

analysis of the list, showed that the benefits fell into two groups: those that came from within the organisation (**intrinsic**) and those from the external environment (**extrinsic**). In each case, the benefits were related to one of three broad categories identified from the work on the aims:

- **Mission benefits:** related to the mission of the organisation to provide either higher education (HEI and FEC), or business products (employer organisation).
- **Developmental benefits:** have a developmental or change management aspect either for the organisation itself or its staff.
- **Business benefits:** related to the sustainability of the business of the organisation (HEI, FEC and employer organisations).

Figure 6.5 shows this generalised model drawn from the data. Other studies have considered what participants see as benefits to collaborative development (for example Tett *et al*, 2003) but this model facilitates consideration of whether each partner within a collaborative relationship sees these benefits in the same or a different way. The model demonstrates that the stakeholders in the partnership perceive that there are mission, development and business benefits accruing that originate within and outside the organisations themselves. The arrows show the perceptual link between the stakeholder and the perceived benefit. By analysing the text of the interviews, it was possible to identify the relative importance of these perceived benefits and illustrate this by constructing perceptual maps of the benefits. The method employed to do this is explained in the next section.

Figure 6.5 Model of the perceived benefits of collaborative partnerships



6.4 Employing the Model

Figure 6.6 shows the full list of benefits taken from the interviews and the questionnaire returns, classified according to whether they originated inside or outside the institution and whether they fell into **mission**, **development** or **business** groupings. This list in no way indicates the relative importance given to them. For example, a benefit such as *work-based learning opportunities* only occurred once, whereas *widening participation/ social inclusion* was mentioned by every participant. The definition of these benefits taken from the Nvivo memos (which were important to retain consistency of definition for coding between analysis sessions) is shown in Appendix 8. For example, the benefit **prestige and**

reputation could refer to the programme, the staff, or the organisation but by referring to the memo the meaning was clear:

'Prestige and reputation: Organisation gaining additional prestige or an enhanced reputation through association with the partnership.'

Figure 6.6 Perceived benefits of collaborative partnerships for curriculum development in undergraduate programmes

	MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
INTRINSIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for students • Research • Progression • Better links with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff development • Enhanced motivation • Increased understanding • Tackle elitism • Workforce development • Tackle conservatism • Working with responsive students • Pedagogical development • Personal satisfaction • Personal development • Increased confidence • Work-based learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of students • Self preservation • Widen curriculum offer • Financial gain • Staff recruitment and retention
EXTRINSIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering government policy • Prestige and reputation • WP/social inclusion • Delivery close to need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working • Accreditation and qualifications • Professionalisation • Career enhancement • Improved QA • Learning from each other about change management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to resources • Enhanced PR • Think global, act local • Access to expertise • Regional development • Market-led economy • Networking across institutions • Better marketing

The interviews and the questionnaires (especially question 2.13, Appendix 4) provided evidence of the emphasis given to the benefits by the participants. This emphasis was determined in several ways. The interviews were interrogated using the **search** tool in Nvivo to isolate individual benefits and to record the dimensions of the interview text. Two elements were thought to be useful to indicate weighting: the number of characters in the passage relating to the benefit, and the number of different occasions that the interviewee talked about that particular benefit (frequency). This is not the only method of analysis that was adopted. For example, text was also analysed for themes (recorded in the coding), and the language was explored for participant emphasis (recorded in the memos). However, the elements of frequency and volume of text offer an

indication of the strength of feeling around the perceived benefits, as this is likely to be a key motivating factor for involvement in partnership.

For each interviewee, there was a record of the volume of text on each benefit and the frequency of times it was mentioned. Figure 6.7 shows an example taken from the HND programme. For each programme, the benefits were totalled into an indicative score calculated using both volume and frequency. The total volume of text was divided by 500 (a typical paragraph length), rounded to the nearest figure and then added to the frequency of mentions. Thus in Figure 6.7 for the staff development benefit this record would score:

**Total volume of text (2575 characters) divided by 500 +
number of separate mentions of the benefit (3) = 8.**

The questionnaire data on benefits was also included on the frequency of mentions with one point being added for each mention on the questionnaire returns for that programme (shown as * on the table in Figure 6.7). These indicators were then used in addition to the evidence from the individuals' responses in the qualitative record.

I am aware that this method of assigning numerical scores to convey frequency and volume and adding them together assumes a linearity that possibly over simplifies a more complex reality, and that the technique gives these two elements of participant emphasis equal weighting. It also signifies a particular direction in the weighting. However it does provide a reasonable approach to assigning an emphasis to each perceived benefit and moves the analysis beyond that of individual response. The data from which these indicators are drawn are grounded in the words of the individuals recorded in the interviews and captured by the qualitative coding. Other aspects of emphasis by the participants (such as gestures and tone of voice) were recorded in the transcripts by notes and memos and these have also indirectly influenced the writing of the narrative. There is no assumption where this weighting technique has been adopted

that the numerical data is used in a mathematical or statistical way: it is dimensional and indicative only; and the resultant models are conceptual and reflect the qualitative analysis of the interviews.

This method of scoring is indicative of the emphasis assigned to the individual for each benefit. Of course, other metrics for gauging emphasis could have been used - for example, by multiplying the indicators - and this might have led to different weightings. The purpose is solely to illustrate how this part of the evidence can be compounded to supplement the data from the participants' responses in the interviews.

Figure 6.7 Benefits results table for Henry, New University

	MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
INTRINSIC		Staff Development $873+1478+224=2575$ Enhanced motivation 112 Pedagogical development 480 Personal satisfaction $356+320=676$ Personal development 517	Recruitment of students $300+780+78=1158$ Financial gain $46+603+776=1425$ Staff recruitment and retention 1909
EXTRINSIC	Delivering Government Policy $74+138=212$ Prestige and Reputation $14+12=26$ WP/Social Inclusion $114+1172+992+244+515+676+178 =3891$	Partnership working*	Regional development 498

From this data, for each programme, as appropriate to the stakeholder mix, '**Benefits Results**' tables (Figure 6.8) were produced for:

- The programme as a whole – all interviewees
- The HEI interviewees
- The FEC/College interviewees
- The Employers
- The Staff teaching on the programme

Figure 6.8 The benefits results for the HND programme

	MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
INTRINSIC	Providing opportunities for students 18 Research 0 Progression 23 Better links with students 0	Staff Development 22 Enhanced motivation 1 Increased understanding 0 Tackle elitism 5 Workforce development 13 Tackle conservatism 0 Working with responsive students 4 Pedagogical development 5 Personal satisfaction 15 Personal development 13 Increased confidence 0 Work-based learning opportunities 0	Recruitment of students 40 Self preservation 0 Widen curriculum offer 1 Financial gain 19 Staff recruitment & retention 9
EXTRINSIC	Delivering Government Policy 26 Prestige and Reputation 18 WP/Social Inclusion 70 Delivery close to need 0	Partnership working 13 Accreditation & qualifications 5 Professionalisation 0 Career Enhancement 10 Improved QA 1 Learning from each other about change management 0	Access to resources 12 Enhanced PR 0 Think global, act local 3 Access to expertise 3 Regional development 19 Market-led economy 4 Networking across institutions 0 Better marketing 0

In order to compare the cells in the model; the total weightings for each of the six cells were shown as a percentage of the overall figure (Figure 6.9). The use of percentages here is an important step in the analysis as it gets rid of the volume biases that may occur between the different sets of participants and allows the programmes and institutions to be compared. The figures show that for the HND programme at New University, the greatest weighting in terms of volume and frequency is the extrinsic mission benefits that accounted for 30.7% of the total. These relate to benefits such as fulfilling the demands of government policy,

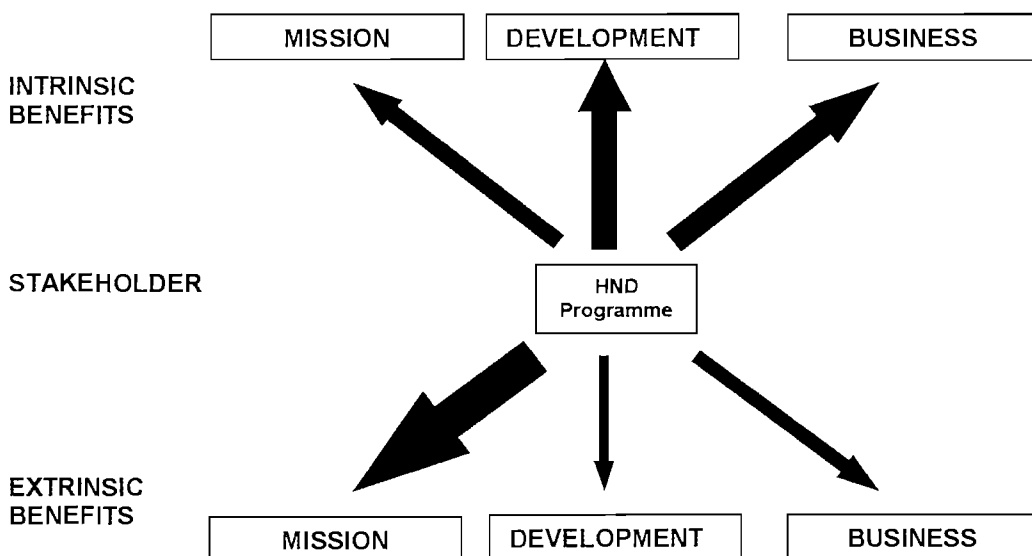
Figure 6.9 The percentage score for each of the benefits cells for the HND programme

	MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
INTRINSIC	11%	21%	18.6%
EXTRINSIC	30.7%	7.7%	11%

developing programmes that are more socially inclusive and developing institutional prestige and reputation. In contrast, the group of benefits mentioned least by the participants in this programme team were the external developmental benefits (7.7%). These relate to benefits such as partnership working, career enhancement for staff and students engaged on work-based learning programmes, and the provision of qualifications.

These percentage aggregate scores were used to draw diagrams of the model (Figure 6.5) to indicate the importance of different benefits to participant groups. The arrows indicate the relative importance by their width: the percentage score shown by a scale using 1 point font for each 2% score. As previously explained, they are indicative and conceptual. Figure 6.10 shows an example for the whole HND programme. It shows that the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits are evenly balanced. Internally the developmental and business benefits are given more weight by the participants than the internal mission benefits. However, extrinsically, those benefits relating to the mission are given most weight by the participants. This approach has been applied to each of the programmes in the research study and the results are shown in Figures 6.11 - 6.22.

Figure 6.10 The model of benefits applied to the HND business programme at New University



6.5 The Results of Perceived Benefits of Collaborative Curriculum Development by Programme

In this section the model is applied to each programme to show the perception of benefits of collaboration from different viewpoints. The model assists with understanding the different stakeholder perspectives and aids comparison between the programmes. Rather than taking a themed approach, the data is presented here by programme to emphasise the similarities and differences that existed between stakeholder groups and between programmes.

6.5.1 FdA Working with Children, Old University (Figures 6.11/6.12)

In this programme, the benefits are dominated by the intrinsic development and the extrinsic mission benefits. The programme was developed specifically to fulfil a role in workforce development and to provide a qualification for intermediate professionals working with children, such as nursery nurses and classroom assistants. It filled an important gap in the market for students who had not had an access route into HE, yet had aspirations to work at a more advanced level as higher level teaching assistants or teachers. There was a clear developmental motivation for students that was reflected in the responses (45.2%). Other developmental benefits showed up strongly including increasing the understanding of the students about their job and providing personal development opportunities, both for students and staff. There was also a high level of personal satisfaction from the participants who felt that they had provided a programme that met the needs of students and the workplace.

The importance of the developmental benefits was particularly strongly expressed by those in FECs (54.6%) who were actively engaged in teaching and for whom the developmental aspects for students were

Figure 6.11 Weighting of benefits for the Working With Children Programme, Old University

		MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
All participants in the programme	INTRINSIC	10.3%	38.8%	7.1%
	EXTRINSIC	29.1%	6.4%	8.3%
HEI participants	INTRINSIC	9.2%	34.0%	7.8%
	EXTRINSIC	34.0%	6.0%	9.06%
Employer participants	INTRINSIC	10.2%	36.7%	8.2%
	EXTRINSIC	34.7%	6.1%	4.1%
FEC participants	INTRINSIC	10.4%	47.5%	7.1%
	EXTRINSIC	19.1%	7.1%	8.8%

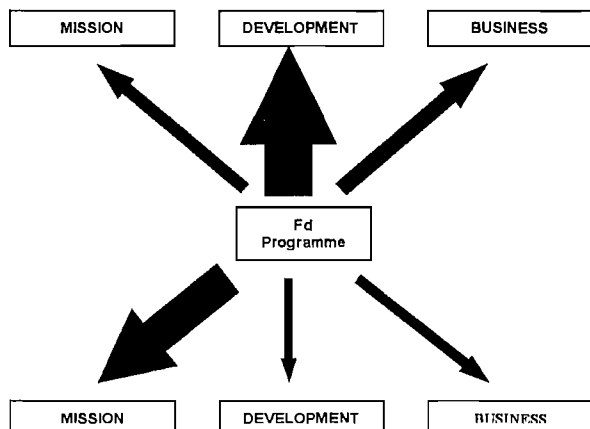
particularly prominent. Another aspect, mentioned by several FE participants, was the development opportunities for staff of being able to engage in HE delivery and the knock-on effect of increased motivation. As Michael explained:

‘We had those colleagues who were really frustrated University lecturers, who were completely absorbed in their subject, well-read, saw themselves as academics and had waited all their life for an opportunity to deliver higher education work ...’
Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU. (18: 52)

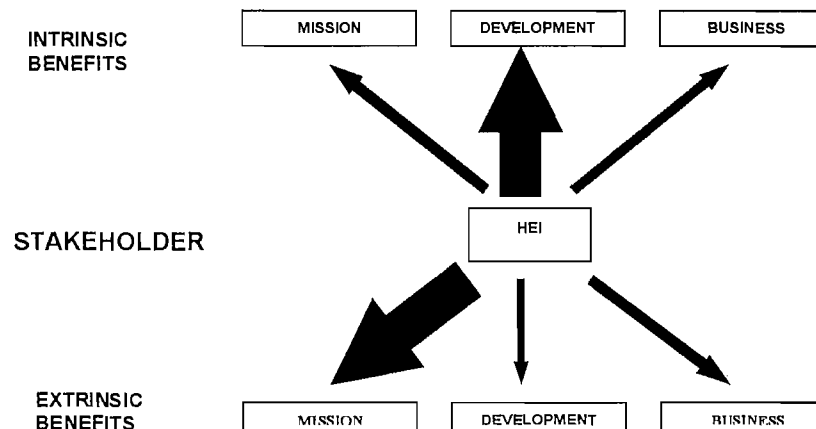
The HEI participants felt that intrinsic benefits came from changing staff attitudes towards the delivery of needs-led curriculum (34%). Old University, although involved with the established professions (medicine, law, nursing, teaching etc) had not engaged significantly in innovative programme design for other groups of workers. Some of the participants, from within and outside of the HEI, saw this as a form of elitism, a dangerous lack of market awareness and not in line with political and social ideology. Simon expresses it thus:

Figure 6.12 Perceived benefits models for the Fd Working with Children programme at Old University

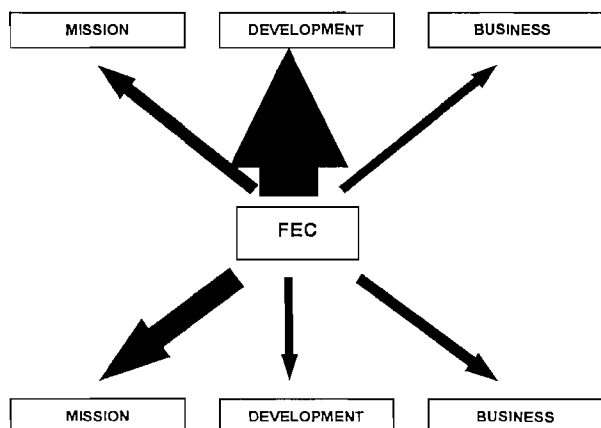
(a) All participants in the programme



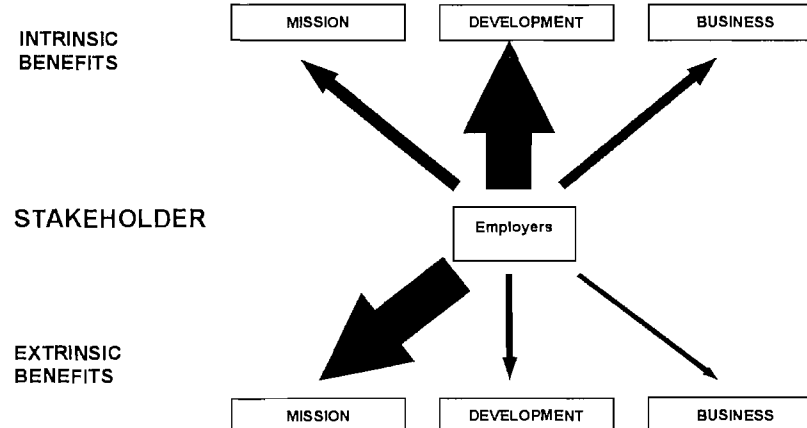
(b) Participants linked to the HEI



(c) Participants linked to the FEC



(d) Participants linked to the Employers



'I suppose my view is that the world... is changing and the notion of elite academic institutions who operate to their own sets of values without reference to wider concerns in society... are disappearing. It's not tenable anymore. ... Organisations that don't engage run the risk of ultimately going out of existence.'
Simon, Senior Manager, OU. (106: 323)

The quotation suggests that universities need increasingly to be aware of the perception of their relevance in the modern world and how marketisation of HE might manifest itself. It is also indicative of the workforce restructuring which had already affected other public services as they became more consumer-aware.

The extrinsic mission benefits related to the stakeholders' feeling that the programme delivered government policy through its aim of reducing social exclusion by widening participation in HE (29.1%). The importance of this aspect is shown by the following quotation from Jane:

'If we look at widening participation as building capacity within certain areas of the workforce... [it is an important benefit]. Most of the students on the Working with Children [programme] for example, 75% of them, are from ... a widening participation cohort.'
Jane, Outreach, OU. (12: 32)

The students were principally mature women who had returned to the workplace as classroom assistants, nursery nurses or childminders after having had their own children. As the employers were from the public services, the fact that the mission-related benefits (44.9%) outweighed the business benefits (12.3%) is not surprising and, in fact, the employers placed the lowest stress on the extrinsic business benefits (4.1%). As in the case of the HEI, employers saw engaging with government policy and tackling social exclusion as important elements of continued funding (34.7%). However, the employers gave a slightly greater emphasis to the intrinsic business benefits (8.2%) and in particular to staff recruitment and retention which they saw as an important part of workforce modernisation. Old University is located in an area of high property prices and the employers needed to have a strategy for developing and

retaining their key workers. Classroom assistants provide a ready source of staff wanting to train as qualified teachers and, as existing local residents, high house prices are not a deterrent. Providing training, qualification and progression opportunities makes good business sense for the LEAs and the head-teachers.

In summary, the benefits for the Working with Children programme are closely related to the stated aims and the fact that this is a foundation degree that provides progression for staff in the paraprofessional areas. Foundation degrees aim to be needs-led and have explicit workforce development and widening participation aims. The evidence from this example seems to indicate that these aims are being realised at least in the minds of the participants.

6.5.2 DipHE Canine Assistance Studies, Old University (Figures 6.13/ 6.14)

The model for the whole programme (Figure 6.14a) suggests that the developmental benefits (58.5%) are perceived as most important. This is particularly so for the employer participants (72.8%) and the teaching staff (71.2%) (Figure 6.14 c and d) but less so for the HEI (39.9%) where the external environment was seen as a key factor (50.2% compared to 41.3% for employers). The HE context during the programme development (2001-2002) was dominated by institutions trying to address the government's widening participation (WP) agenda, and senior managers were becoming aware that in order to alter the student mix, significant changes had to be made to the curriculum. To achieve this, partnership work made good sense.

For the HEI, there were also important considerations such as the research agenda. In this case, Old University aimed to be excellent in all areas and to maintain a position nationally in the top ten of HEIs.

'Because the real motivation at the moment is the next RAE and making sure that every part of the University is a 5 rated department.'* Simon, Senior Manager, OU. (28: 82)

Figure 6.13 Weighting of benefits for the Canine Assistance Studies programme, Old University

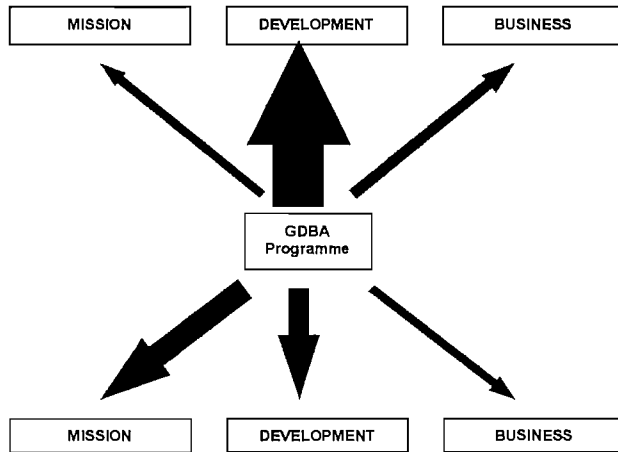
		MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
All participants in the programme	INTRINSIC	7.0%	41.7%	8.8%
	EXTRINSIC	18.6%	16.8%	7.0%
HEI participants	INTRINSIC	8.6%	30.9%	10.3%
	EXTRINSIC	31.8%	9.0%	9.4%
Employer participants	INTRINSIC	6.5%	47.0%	5.2%
	EXTRINSIC	9.0%	25.8%	6.5%
Teaching Staff participants	INTRINSIC	8.8%	47.9%	9.3%
	EXTRINSIC	6.5%	23.3%	4.2%

Business considerations of research and development and recruitment of excellent students were also important. Collaborative working which allowed partners to assist in the WP and workforce development agendas made good business sense as it might impact on funding. Prestige and reputation were key elements of the decision-making processes and the benefits to the University were measured in those terms.

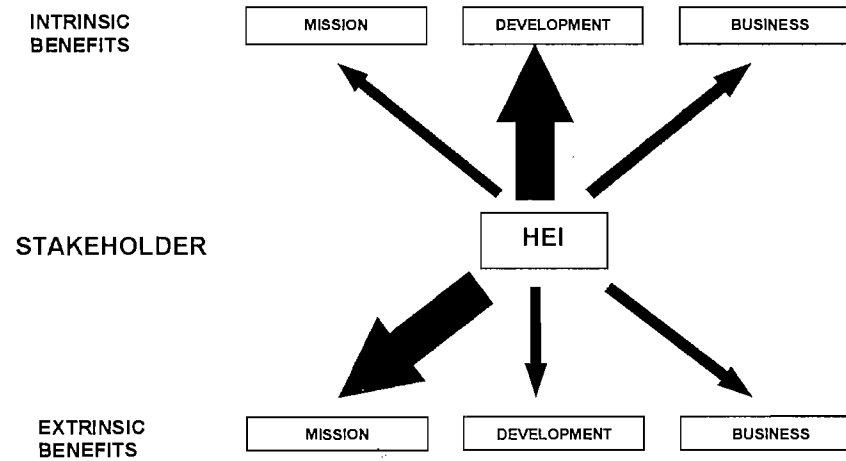
Figures 6.14c and d show a very different pattern for the employers and the lecturers, most of whom came from the employer organisation, where the benefits were related to development drivers. This charitable organisation was in the process of embarking on a major service review. It had suffered financially due to the Stock Market fall in the 1990s and it needed to modernise its business to continue to provide client services. It was restructuring, modernising and the staff were being asked to take on

Figure 6.14 Perceived benefits models for the Canine Assistance Studies programme at Old University

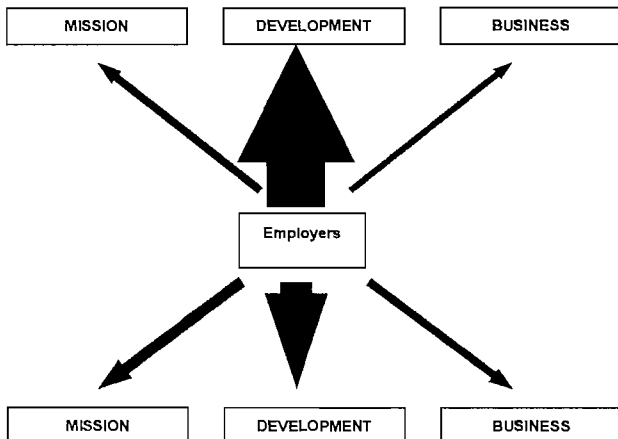
(a) All participants in the programme



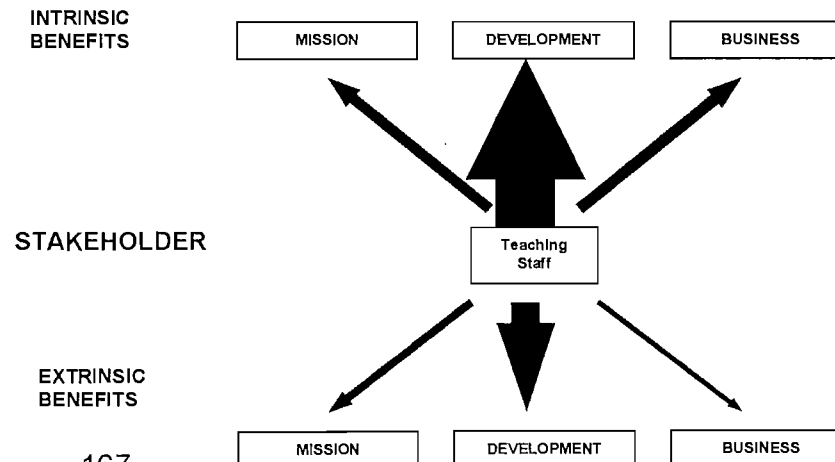
(b) Participants linked to the HEI



(c) Participants linked to the Employer



(d) Teaching Staff Participants



more flexible roles. This background of workforce modernisation meant that the ability of education to assist change by transforming attitudes, values and practices was an essential requirement. It moved the organisation from an apprenticeship model to an educational one, allowing staff to examine disability issues in a broader social context. This is illustrated by the following quotation about the pre-existing apprenticeship scheme:

'...being an internal qualification, it tended to lead towards parochial practices. It ... was managed locally and although there were centrally run units in ... the old apprenticeship ..., students spent a long time in their own local team and so ... there wasn't a consistency; parochial practices developed.'
Max, Employer Lecturer, OU.(35: 98)

The aim was for teaching staff and those staff training to be Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMLs) to develop their practice (47%). The principal extrinsic benefits were also developmental (25.8%) as the programme increased the staff's professionalism and their chance to receive an internationally recognised qualification. It also raised the organisation's profile and provided an opportunity for this programme to become the global standard.

It is interesting to note that the business drivers showed very weakly as benefits (11.7%) when it might have been expected that, for the employers, they would be dominant. Discussion with the employers suggested that this reflected the charitable status of the organisation where the provision of a client service was paramount and this eclipsed the financial considerations. In this case, as in all programmes which involved public service employers, the business considerations were more to do with social enterprise objectives and social 'bottom lines' rather than purely economic ones. The business advantages are difficult to quantify in terms of return. The money paid to the HEI for validation was more easily determined than the value accrued through recruitment, retention and quality of staff within the employer organisation.

The perceived benefits to staff involved in managing or teaching the programme are shown in Figure 6.14d. The dominant benefit driver was the development of the teaching staff within the organisation (47.9%). In the interviews staff talked about the importance of developing their skills, understanding and knowledge through working alongside university colleagues and through the opportunities for higher level study available to them. The following quotation shows how this allowed staff to '*raise their game*' and improve their chances of advancement.

*'They got the opportunity to **raise their game**.... They were operating now with a significant external partner as well as all the internal issues they were dealing with. And that gave them the opportunity to develop new skills, to show themselves in new situations...the team itself has now moved about... they are moving on to new jobs...but the opportunities to move ... has in part come from their experience of working with this programme.'*
Tim, Employer, OU. (74: 223)

The staff also gained additional HE qualifications themselves. The HEI demanded engagement at higher degree or professional level of those staff acting as accredited tutors. In part this raised the confidence of staff to look for new roles and provided them with a greater chance of success when promotional opportunities appeared. All of the original staff have since moved on to new roles at a higher level, all within the field of assistance dogs charities and all but one with the same organisation.

6.5.3 FdA Early Years, New University (Figures 6.15/6.16)

The foundation degree programme in Early Years contrasts with the other programmes in the emphasis given to extrinsic benefits (51.5%) (Figure 6.16a). The dominant areas occurred in the intrinsic developmental benefits (32.3%) and the extrinsic mission benefits (24.4%) but the participants also talked a lot about the importance of both extrinsic developmental and business benefits (21.5%). The programme was designed to tackle workforce development as has been described in the

Working With Children programme. It also had WP objectives and was mission-driven. The interviews demonstrated the commitment of all participants to providing opportunities for students and their pleasure in seeing them develop skills, understanding and confidence.

In terms of the mission-related intrinsic benefits, providing opportunities and progression for students was particularly important to the FE participants (14.3%) (Figure 6.16c). Partnership allowed the delivery to be more flexible and local. This was seen as crucial in a programme designed to widen participation where reaching students required appropriate provision of programmes in convenient and non-threatening environments. Many universities have promoted 'aspiration raising activity' to promote WP, and although this may stimulate demand, it seems that this isn't much good if appropriate learning experiences aren't available. As Matt explained, the benefits are about:

'...being able to offer curriculum in other settings that are more convenient for learners offering opportunities to people who aren't able to come to [New University] full-time four days a week but could study at a local College or ... the workplace ... It's about offering opportunities to people who have the ability and the interest to study ..., yet the current traditional delivery mechanism isn't appropriate.'

Matt, Outreach, NU. (67: 210)

For many students the experience of success in an educational setting was new as many had left school early with few qualifications. The opportunity to follow a programme designed for them which developed the skills they were already mastering in their job was a significant benefit. It gave them confidence to take their learning back into the workplace. It was an advantage that a number of the participants mentioned and in the following quotation Fiona explains how she felt the students had grown through experiencing success:

'They will have done things they have never done before, they will have done some things they don't like but they will have ... got through it. That sense of achievement, particularly if we are talking

about non-traditional students who may have had a very poor experience of the standard educational system. ...There's nothing that succeeds like success, so if they get a successful educational experience then they'll get things out of it.'
 Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (80: 268)

Workforce development was viewed by all participants as an important intrinsic developmental benefit which is unsurprising in a programme designed for this. The employers in particular demonstrated this although they perceived most of the benefits to be developmental (77.5%).

Workforce development was mentioned by all of the participants and many of them went on to mention other developmental aspects.

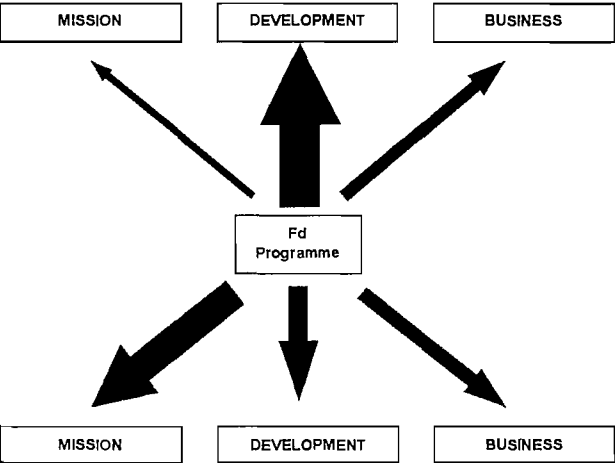
The programme recruited people already working in Early Years settings and aimed to provide them with training to improve their practice and to provide progression. Foundation degrees have been used instrumentally in a number of public services (for example education, health, youth work and community development) to modernise the workforce and increase

Figure 6.15 Weighting of benefits for the Early Years programme, New University

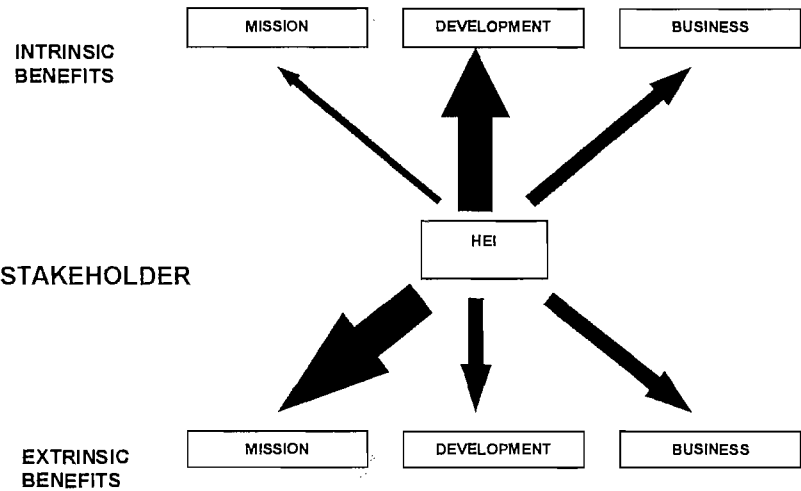
		MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
All participants in the programme	INTRINSIC	6.0%	32.3%	10.2%
	EXTRINSIC	24.4%	15.8%	11.3%
HEI participants	INTRINSIC	6.1%	27.6%	11.4%
	EXTRINSIC	29.7%	12.6%	12.6%
FEC participants	INTRINSIC	14.3%	38.1%	6.4%
	EXTRINSIC	11.1%	17.5%	12.7%
Employer participants	INTRINSIC	0%	45.0%	7.5%
	EXTRINSIC	15.0%	32.5%	0%

Figure 6.16 Perceived benefits models for the Early Years programme at New University

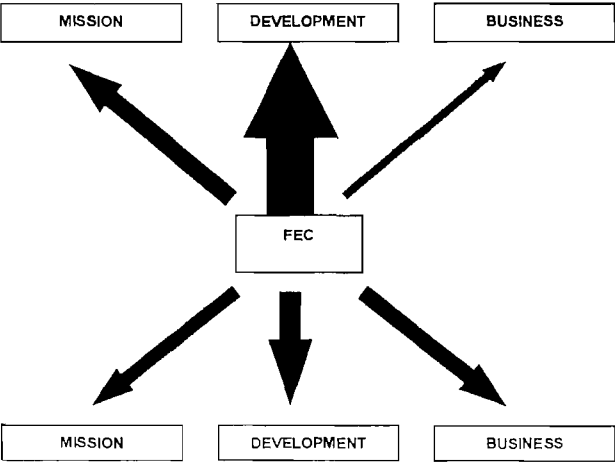
(a) All participants in the programme



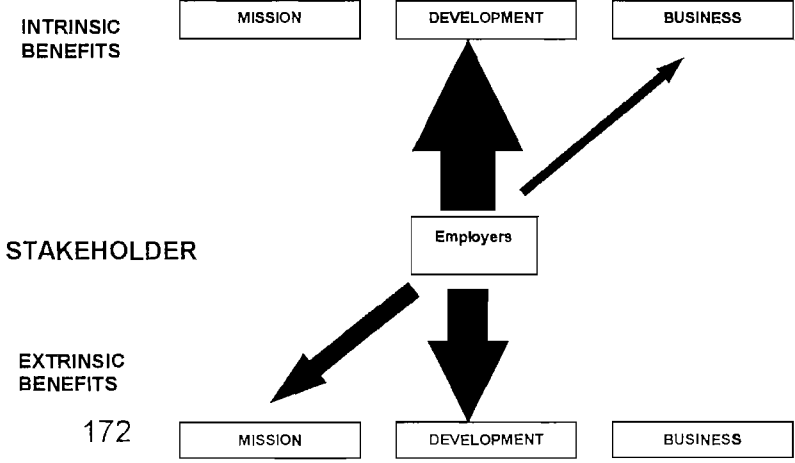
(b) Participants linked to the HEI



(c) Participants linked to the FECs



(d) Participants linked to the Employer



the flexibility of professional roles. This was true here where the role of a qualified classroom assistant or nursery nurse would provide the impetus to change the structure of the workforce. Exactly how these changes will impact is yet to be seen. However, several participants mentioned the importance of having a trained, confident and articulate group in the workplace in stimulating change.

This was an important theme in the response of Nigel, the Programme Director who had been a head teacher. He saw “giving a voice’ to an undervalued part of the workforce as a major benefit:

‘If we can produce people who can argue their corner... effectively, we will have done something to move away from the notion... that these are not just overpaid childminders These are professionals in their own right who can argue their corner, who can look effectively at raising quality within the sector...it’s very important that students understand that what they’re doing is becoming effective advocates for the profession...’

Nigel, Programme Director, NU. (108: 332)

The quotation also draws attention to the importance of gaining qualification as an important step in raising the status of staff and developing professionalism. The competence of developing advocacy was mentioned in a number of interviews (also in the other foundation degrees) as an essential element of producing the capacity to modernise the workforce. Nigel, as an ex-head teacher, is very aware of this, as is shown in the next quotation:

‘They’ve all had to do a presentation on Equal Opportunities to a group and it’s been quite a struggle for some of them These are people who will do “head, shoulders, knees and toes’until they drop but the idea of doing it in front of adults who may ask awkward questions is something that they really felt was a major challenge. ... These transferable skills will mean that they can stand up in front of a governing body and make a plea for extra money or go for a more effective job at a later date because they have the presentation skills for it.’

Nigel, Programme Director, NU. (110: 338)

Not everyone saw this increased confidence as positive. Clearly, having a more articulate and ambitious workforce, can have its downside too. Employers expressed concern at losing staff who applied for more senior jobs elsewhere once they qualified and there were also concerns about how changing roles might impact on service delivery. The first students on the programme were seen by the interviewees as pioneers who may generate further change in the system. Employers can be caught in a dilemma where by supporting staff to attend programmes as a motivating factor to **retain** staff, they may be helping the individual to gain the qualifications they need to **leave** in pursuit of promotion. This is illustrated by a quotation from Eva who is the head teacher employer of one of the students:

'I suppose there are concerns at the way it's developing but I do think the aim and having a ladder, where people can move on can only be good if they want to develop their skills. But how that's done... we've got to watch very carefully, because if we do lose the core of quality nursery education I think that children are going to be the ones who have a raw deal.'

Eva, Employer, NU. (65: 188)

The business benefits were mentioned by the education institutions (HEI 24% and FEC 19.1%) more than by the employers who only stressed the impact on recruitment and retention of staff (7.5%). Both HE and FE saw recruitment of more students as an important benefit. Partnership working provides the HEI with a regional, WP market that is more ready to access HE through a partner college. New University was sensitive to criticisms of elitism and was keen to demonstrate that it is a valuable player in providing services to the region. There was also a financial benefit to educational institutions either indirectly through higher recruitment and access to resources, or directly in terms of cash payments made to the colleges to teach the HE programmes. In this case, New University was in a difficult position of having to increase student numbers but having a severely constrained site within an ancient city. Partnership work offered an opportunity to expand outside the city boundaries, achieve recruitment

targets and thereby secure funding. Collaborative arrangements made good business sense as well as having a social benefit. Matt explained:

'[New University's] history with partners was to some degree driven by funding and numbers... when HEFCE ...reduced the funding to institutions and [New University] was basically faced with the situation where it either could lose funding or increase numbers. And because of [the] particular circumstances within the city it was unable to expand its numbers because of accommodation and restrictions that it had on it, so it went out into franchised programmes There wasn't a genuine commitment to increasing opportunity; to work within the region or to tie up partnerships with institutions with a view to other sorts of links. [It] was surely a financial necessity.' Matt, Outreach, NU. (50: 158)

Finally for the education institutions, there was an awareness of the importance of public relations and reputation in the region. They were aware of seeming relevant and proactive to taxpayers, the employers and increasingly the students. Pat explains this with respect to her College:

'[It] certainly raises the profile of the College because we're offering things that are available elsewhere whereas they think we're elitist. We're not at all. So I think that that's a good thing. We're seen to offer the same as others so we're on a level playing field.'
Pat, FE Course Leader, NU. (120: 358)

This external reputation factor was also important in the case of the HND at New University which will be considered in the next section.

6.5.4 HND Business Programme, New University (Figures 6.17/6.18)

The model applied to the HND programme only reflected the benefits as perceived by the education institutions. The employer involvement in the programme was through the modules designed by the External Examination Board with employer assistance. The HND did not have **direct** employer input at the point of curriculum development and

partners chose modules from a menu provided by the Examination Board. This contrasts with the other programmes studied.

The diagrams in Figure 6.18 show that there was a difference in the weighting of benefits between the HEI and the FECs. The HEI's emphasis was on the external mission benefits (35.7%) (Figure 6.18b), especially delivering Government policy on WP, and the complementary, intrinsic developmental and business benefits (total 39.6%), especially recruitment of students. The programme from the point of view of the HEI was a way of exploiting the regional market and increasing recruitment without having to provide space on campus. As in the case of the Early Years programme, the university's concern about its reputation as the regional university of choice is a significant one, and staff were very aware of this as a strong driver towards partnership. The quotation from Mark describes the importance of this for the Business School in demonstrating its engagement with the university's regional agenda:

'To some extent, I think for a university ... local networking is very important I don't think the Business School has really gained a great deal from it. I think it has gained a tactical advantage within the University in that we've had these programmes which have run for ... a long time..., so it does mean that the Business School can hold its own in any internal debate about the region.'

Mark, Programme Director, NU. (138: 419)

Business benefits also came from student recruitment. However, in contrast to the Early Years programme, the Business School saw this more as a benefit in raising the **quality** of entry and WP rather than in terms of **numbers** of students. The Business School is a selecting School rather than a recruiting School as Henry explains:

'...the reality is that we're over-subscribed. We get more students than we need. We push our entry grades up, not because we particularly want to, although it's nice for the league tables, but because we have to find some way of rationing demand. So we haven't got the imperative of some institutions which are struggling to hit their numbers ...'

Henry, Senior Manager, NU (92: 300)

The partnership HND route provided access to a different type of student and, although the numbers were small, the majority were WP students. These counted towards the University's overall benchmark figure, even though they were being taught in FECs, and provided progression into the Business degree for students who before had no obvious HE route. Mark explains:

'I think from the point of view of the students the benefits have been absolutely enormous, ...an increasingly high proportion of the HND students do come to us, very few of them fail to graduate and this is a group of students who, if they'd applied to us in the first place... I think there's probably only one who would have got a place on the degree in the first place. ... And I think that has made the whole thing worthwhile.

Mark, Programme Director, NU. (142: 431)

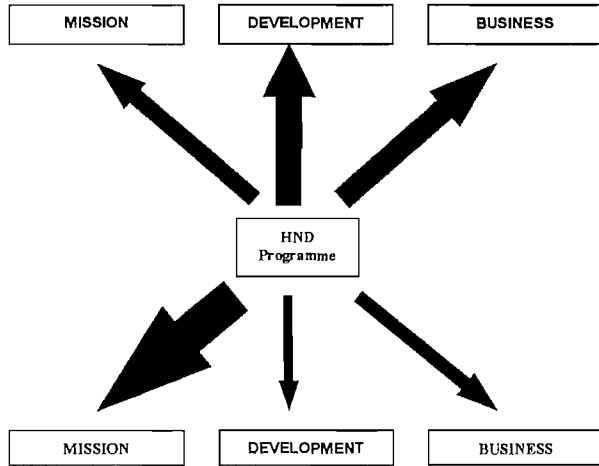
Another group of benefits that were seen by the HE participants to be significant were those that related to staff development. One such benefit that came from collaborative work was the opportunity for HE and FE staff to share development opportunities and to learn about each other. Although this was often cited as a benefit both by HE and FE, the

Figure 6.17 Weighting of benefits for the Business programme, New University

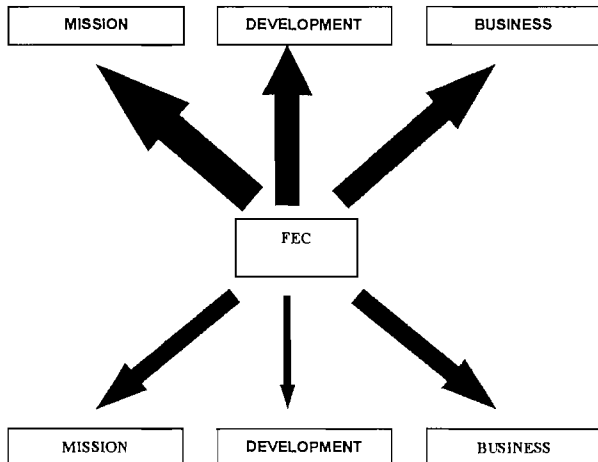
		MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
All participants in the programme	INTRINSIC	11%	21%	18.6%
	EXTRINSIC	30.7%	7.7%	11%
HEI participants	INTRINSIC	6.4%	20.5%	19.1%
	EXTRINSIC	35.7%	7.8%	10.6%
FEC participants	INTRINSIC	25.5%	20.2%	19.1%
	EXTRINSIC	13.8%	6.4%	14.9%

Figure 6.18 Perceived benefits models for the Business programme at New University

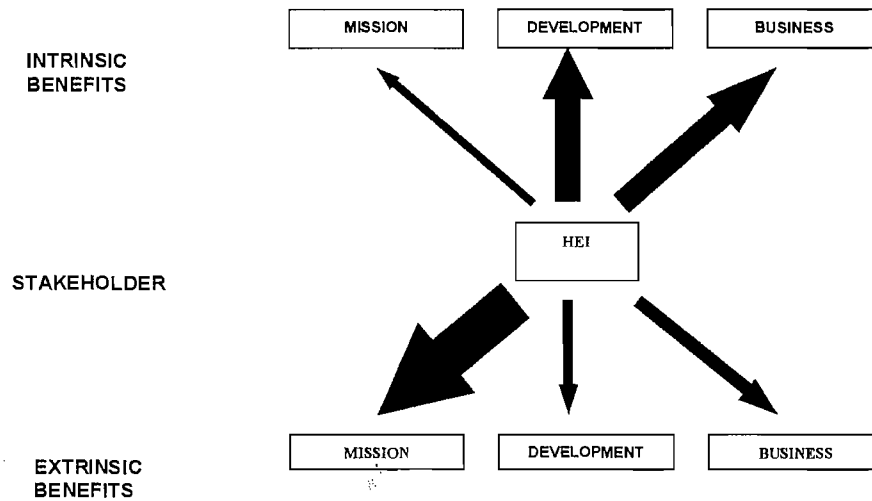
(a) All participants in the programme



(c) Participants linked to the FEC



(b) Participants linked to the HEI



INTRINSIC BENEFITS
STAKEHOLDER
EXTRINSIC BENEFITS

comment was usually followed by a qualifying remark about the difficulty of this happening in practice. For example:

'We would love it if there was joint staff development and we've tried to set up all sort of things. With our international collaborations it's part of the deal and ... We can't do it with a franchise twenty miles down the road. Why? We're too busy, can't afford... to pay them. There is staff development done ... but it's not even at the scale that we manage with a franchise that's on the other side of the globe. Now that is appalling.'
Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (96: 314)

As this quotation indicates, the assumption was that HE provides staff training. The opportunity was often more valued by FE than HE and the direction of development need was perceived **by both sides** as being the

FE staff benefiting from their association with HE. The principal reason given for development not happening was that the time constraints in FE make this difficult to arrange, particularly if there is need to travel. In addition, the lack of funding for such activity was seen as a further drain on what is already an expensive way of working.

The FE participants saw a variety of benefits but the balance favoured the intrinsic benefits (64.8%). In terms of the extrinsic benefits there was less emphasis on the mission (13.8%) and more on the business benefits (14.9%) than in the HEI. Internal mission benefits reflected the need for a progression route for business students who need to stay locally. New University was seen as a prestigious provider and working on the programme was seen by FE staff to bring personal status. It was a way of motivating, recruiting and retaining staff at the Colleges and providing opportunities for more rewarding teaching.

Staff expressed their personal satisfaction at being involved in this work rather than on A level and Vocational courses and they saw it as a way of potentially enhancing their careers. Carmen describes what she gets from being involved:

'[I get] ...a lot of satisfaction because the vast majority of students have been fantastic. They are a nice bunch and you do get very close to them, particularly because they are quite small groups. Personally ... it does allow me to go into further depth in areas that I don't go into in terms of my delivery of the A level Business Studies course.'

Carmen, FE Course Leader, NU. (112: 333)

Participants also saw collaboration as providing additional resources. In this programme, student numbers are very small (about 15 students per College) and so the financial resource is low and the programme is marginal with the HEI reporting a loss and the FECs reporting break even. All partners agreed that the numbers in each cohort only just make this form of delivery viable.

One of the most important perceived benefits according to FEC participants is the extrinsic business benefit of enhanced public relations and reputation for the College. The programme was originally validated by a different local HEI which had severe reputation difficulties. This FEC had switched to validation through New University and felt reassured that they were involved in a high quality product. This was an important aspect of providing their students with a progression route and the staff felt that they gained from association with New University. As Carmen explained:

'...it gives us kudos to be able to say we do have this collaboration with New University because the students then go "oh actually that's interesting"and, compared to the collaboration with [other university], I know which one I would much rather have as the overseer of our awards.'

Carmen, FE Course Leader, NU. (104: 309)

One interesting observation on the data is that the FE participants made fewer references to WP as a benefit (13.8%). This may be due to the fact that the students in fact entered the programme at a lower level (into an AS/A2 level programme) and that the HND was a progression route. Most students (over half) were 'staying on', rather than entering the HND and

were not seen as WP gains for HE by the FE staff, although the cohort attracted significant numbers of ethnic minority students and students from socio-economic groups III-V. This contrasted with the importance placed on this benefit by the HEI (35.7%).

6.5.5 FdA/BA Child and Youth Studies Programme, University College (Figures 6.19/6.20)

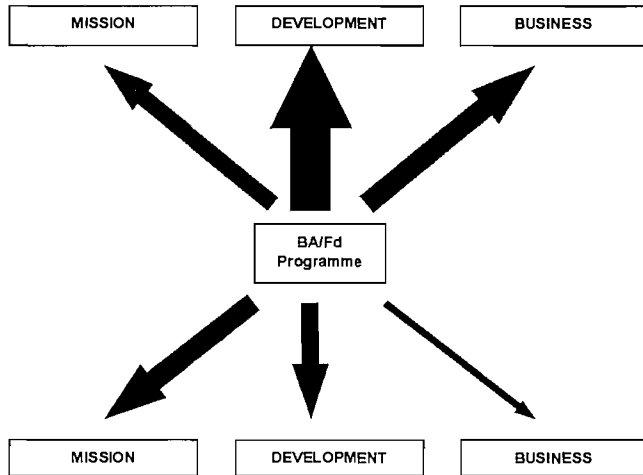
The Foundation Degree in Child and Youth Studies was similar to Canine Assistance Studies in that the partnership was between the HEI and the employer. Teaching was provided by the LEA staff (75% of the teaching) and the HEI staff (25%) working together in the London Borough. The participants placed a greater emphasis on intrinsic perceived benefits (63.3%) than extrinsic ones. The mission and business of the HEI was based on the provision of a service to the region, the provision of professional courses, and outreach. The London Borough’s main aim for the programme was workforce development and provision of a better educational service to the people of the Borough. The LEA was seen as a leader in terms of professional practice and had a national reputation for innovation. The perceived benefits reflected these background positions.

Figure 6.19 Weighting of benefits for the Child and Youth Studies programme, University College

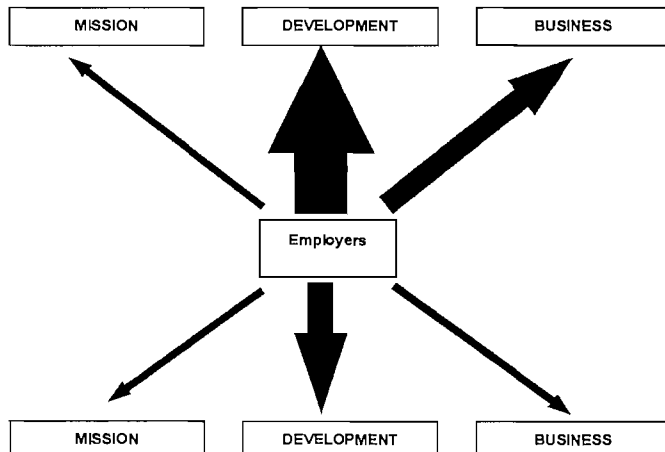
		MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
All participants in the programme	INTRINSIC	13.3%	32.7%	17.3%
	EXTRINSIC	16.5%	14.5%	5.7%
HEI participants	INTRINSIC	17.5%	29.5%	16.3%
	EXTRINSIC	20.5%	10.8%	5.4%
Employer participants	INTRINSIC	6.3%	42.5%	17.5%
	EXTRINSIC	6.3%	21.3%	6.3%

Figure 6.20 Perceived benefits models for the Child and Youth Studies programme, University College

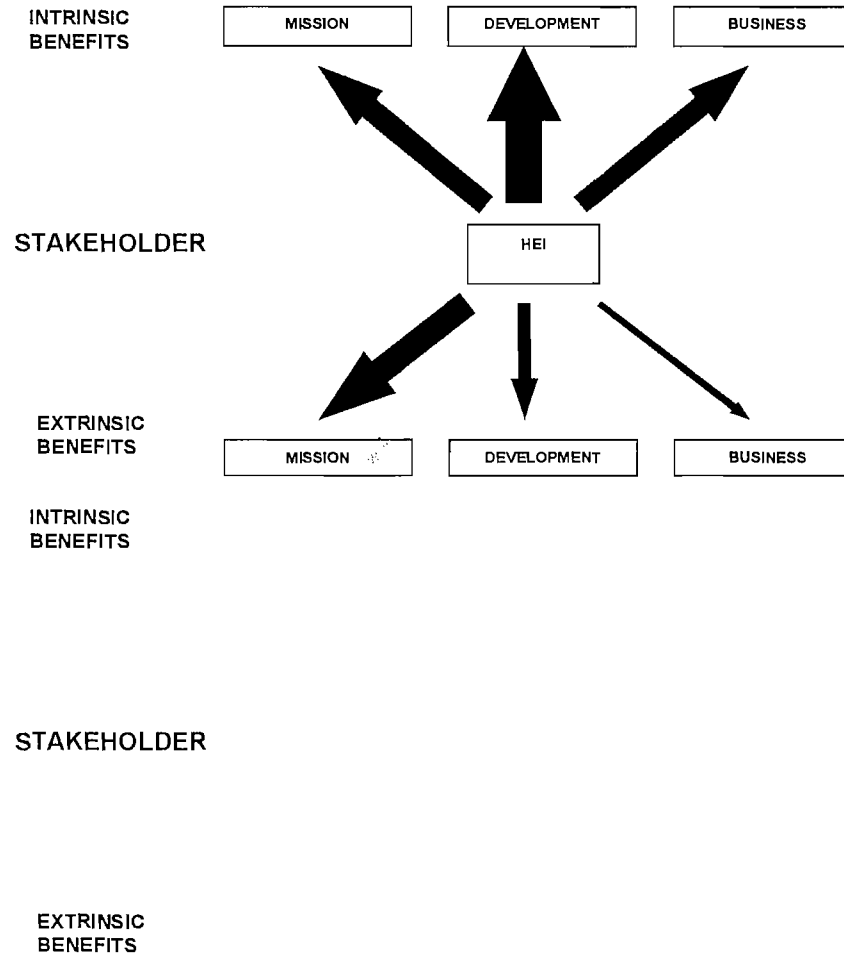
(a) All participants in the programme



(c) Participants linked to the Employer



(b) Participants linked to the HEI



In the HEI there are two principal characteristics of the benefits according to the model (Figure 6.20b). The diagram shows that the intrinsic benefits are dominant (63.3%) and that mission benefits are significantly more important for the HEI (38%) than for the employer (12.6%). The mission benefits relate strongly to students' opportunities, providing progression towards qualified teacher status (QTS) and social inclusion. It is interesting that, in contrast to the other two HEIs offering similar programmes, University College saw this as a good thing for its own sake and the role of government policy was not as heavily emphasised. This is demonstrated in the following two quotations. The first from the Manager of Academic Partnerships which illustrates the strength of the mission benefits in overcoming financial barriers:

'...at the same time we have a commitment to widening participation and those commitments are treated most seriously in a way which super-cedes financial considerations, so we have agreement that we will ... expand the education ... regardless of other drivers.'
Colin, Senior Manager, University College (UC). (24: 70)

In the second quotation Carla is speaking about giving opportunities to students who hadn't before had an opportunity to engage in HE:

'I believe passionately that this group of people need a chance to do something more. Having worked in schools for 30-odd years, you know the value of a classroom assistant and I used to look round for training for mine and they'd be nothing there...and it really feels great to give this group of people something of what they needed.'
Carla, Programme Director, UC. (48: 139)

The development benefits reflected the workforce focus of the programme and its facility for providing personal, professional and pedagogical development opportunities for staff and students. In particular, the HEI saw working in partnership with a leading LEA as a way of keeping their practice up-to-date and relevant:

'I think it's also really nice to spark ideas off and have other people to work with. You can get quite insular and I think having other partners to work with ... keeps you on your toes and I think that it's healthy. ... So I think it helps you keep abreast of developments and that's probably quite a strong argument. ... I think it's mutually beneficial.'

Carol, Programme Director, UC. (82: 256)

The employer perspective was more strongly weighted to the developmental (63.8%) and business (23.8%) benefits. The main motivating factor for the employer was workforce development and their staff recruitment and retention plans. The London Borough found it difficult to attract new staff to teach in schools and they put a lot of emphasis on developing the skills of existing staff and being at the forefront of educational development in the hope that this would attract staff in. However, the Borough is an expensive place to live and a strategy was formulated that would develop the skills and qualifications of the teaching assistants and ultimately 'grow their own' teachers by providing a progression route to QTS status.

'...we've got a very strong career pathway for TAs and our Recruitment Strategy Manager ... saw that we could actually extend career pathways for our TAs ... So we were looking for a partnership to ...actually grow our teachers. If we could have a teaching force that reflected the community in which we work, then we thought that that would be a very positive role model for other LEAs So that we actually could show that we value the children that we teach but also their parents and teaching assistants and the workforce generally. ...

Lucy, Employer, UC. (14: 38)

The above quotation from Lucy also demonstrates an additional benefit that came from this strategy: that the workforce, by being 'home-grown' , would reflect the social composition of the children and parents that they work with.

6.5.6 Advanced Certificate of Education (Post Compulsory)

Programme, University College (Figures 6.21/6.22)

In this programme, the partners are the HEI and the FECs, who also act as the employers as the programme is designed to train FE staff who require a teaching qualification. The model shows a very similar pattern of benefits for the HEI to that in the Child and Youth Studies programme with strong mission (31.5%) and intrinsic benefits (68.5%). The reasons for this are again related to the nature of the institutional mission. Provision of progression opportunities and the qualification of people who hitherto had not had an opportunity to train as teachers were key mission drivers. Interestingly, there was no mention at all by participants of the need to deliver government policy. This was in line with the results from the Child and Youth Studies programme and was another indicator of the institutional mission being a dominant factor in the minds of the staff.

Figure 6.21 Weighting of benefits for the Advanced Certificate of Education (Post Compulsory) programme, University College

		MISSION	DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS
All participants in the programme	INTRINSIC	15.5%	31.8%	17.6%
	EXTRINSIC	15.5%	10.3%	9.3%
HEI participants	INTRINSIC	17.1%	28.3 %	23.1%
	EXTRINSIC	14.5%	10.2%	6.8%
FEC/Employer participants	INTRINSIC	16.0%	30.5%	12.6%
	EXTRINSIC	19.0%	12.6%	9.5%

The developmental benefits were most apparent within the FECs (43.1%) in terms of developing the workforce and increasing understanding. However, there was also a recognition that HE staff benefited from the contact with FE staff. Hilary, employed by the University College, was a frequent visitor to the Colleges where she contributed to the teaching and

administration of the programme. She explains the benefit to her of this day-to-day contact:

'So the advantages to me are that I really feel in there so ... my own teaching and liaison, it's much easier And also just finding out what other people are teaching ... is still interesting and it keeps me up-to-date and ... if I get there early, I go to the coffee bar and ... so I'm rubbing up against people who are in the refectory.'

Hilary, Lecturer, UC. (94: 284)

The business benefits from the University College point of view were dominated by the importance of recruitment of students, although it does not struggle to meet its numbers. The following quotation from the programme director, however, shows that the institution valued the fact that the partnerships with FECs were helping to meet recruitment targets:

'The fact that we have very good solid links with these FE Colleges helps enormously for instance when we are as an institution recruiting students because we have links. ... Students who are studying in FE who want to go to University know about [University College] because [it] does have a presence within those institutions.'

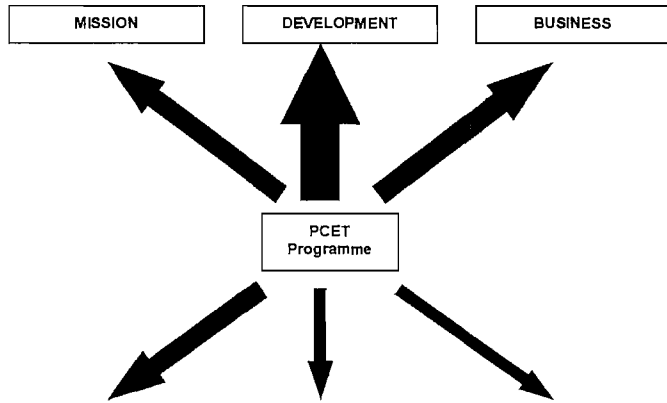
Jack, Programme Director, UC (102: 324)

Close links with the market are an important aspect of maintaining viability of a university college in an HE sector that is increasingly competitive. Despite having another university in the same city, it had increased its viability through partnership work and by concentrating on a specialised market niche: providing vocational courses. The quotation from Jack above demonstrates that a flow of students from a consortium of partners was seen as a great strength:

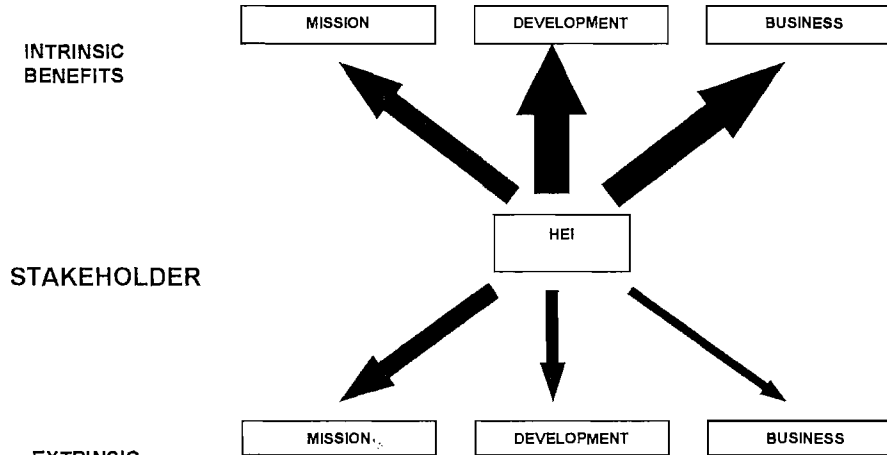
The perceived benefits from the FE participants were more evenly spread across the three categories of mission, development and business, with developmental benefits being the most apparent (43.1%). Intrinsic benefits (59.1%) were mentioned more frequently than extrinsic benefits. The programme was seen as a developmental tool which had largest

Figure 6.22 Perceived benefits models for the Advanced Certificate in PCET programme, University College

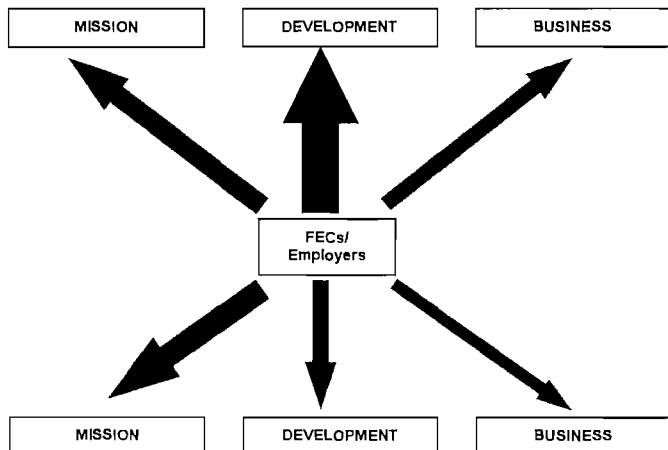
(a) All participants in the programme



(b) Participants linked to the HEI



(c) Participants linked to the Employer



EXTRINSIC BENEFITS
INTRINSIC BENEFITS

STAKEHOLDER

EXTRINSIC BENEFITS

benefit inside the institutions (30.5%). In terms of the mission, progression and WP were the principal benefits, with participants seeing delivery of government policy as an added benefit.

'...there was obviously a need for FE teachers to become qualified ... which was brought in by the government and certainly, in terms of employers in FE and in terms of the developmental needs at [University College], ... they wanted to move on from schools, because in those days the number of qualified teachers in post-compulsory and FE was quite low.'

Travis, FE Course Leader, UC. (44: 128).

Intrinsic development benefits were described in terms of personal and professional development and the ability of students (and thus staff) to reflect on their practice. Extrinsic developmental benefits were seen almost entirely in terms of the provision of teaching qualifications for staff teaching in vocational areas within the Colleges and this programme was designed to meet this need:

'...from September 2001 it became a statutory requirement that people who were going to work in FE Colleges had to be teacher trained. ... There was a ... need coming from local FE Colleges that was saying that they would like their staff to develop Adult Ed staff were coming to us saying we would like staff development opportunities.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (36: 104)

In the FECs the business benefits were seen dominantly in terms of gaining access to additional financial and study resources through partnership with the HEI. This included a transfer of financial resources to the FEC and the opportunity for staff to gain access to staff development, information technology and library resources. In the following quotation Travis explains that a benefit to his College was increased funding:

'Well one reason is obviously funding because there's two sources of funding, one that comes from HEFCE and the one that comes from [the University College] in the form of a grant and we get funded to the extent of £1250 per student per year. ... given that it's multiplied by the number of students on the course it's quite a lot of money. That's rather mundane but it's one reason.'

Travis, FE Course Leader, UC. (84: 249)

Another of the resource benefits that was mentioned by staff from the FECs was access to the learning resources of the HEI including electronic journals through Athens, the library, expertise of academic staff and virtual learning environments (BlackBoard in this case). Sarah explains the benefits to her:

'...so personally it's a great thing because it broadens my horizons and gives me access to wider reading and I can access all the facilities at [University College]. I've got a library card.'

Sarah, FE Lecturer, UC. (107: 314)

Sarah also described the advantages of research and scholarship that she perceived came from being linked with an HEI. There was a common perception in FE that partnership would mean that they would be able to get involved in research. This was usually followed by a statement that, in fact, these opportunities did not present themselves due to a lack of time. It was a benefit that was mentioned by the FE participants in four programmes but the reality was that only Travis was doing research: a PhD paid for by himself and undertaken in his spare time. However, apart from in the case of the Old University, HEI staff also mentioned a lack of time and opportunity to undertake research. Collaborative and partnership working is very time consuming and in fact there is little time for staff to get involved in research. This is a good example of an oft-cited **perceived** benefit which seldom happens in reality.

6.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, two models have been developed which consider the aims and the benefits of the collaborative partnerships for curriculum development. The evidence points to there being three types of aims. Explicit aims are well articulated and shared publicly and they generally relate to the mission of the organisations involved. Emergent aims are those that the partners reveal to each other as trust between them develops. These aims are usually to do with some element of the

operation of the organisation and are seen as broadly developmental. Finally there are the un-stated aims that are only revealed within the organisation or, to some extent, within the relative security of a confidential interview. These are of a more sensitive nature and relate to the business matters of the organisation. Without understanding that a partner may have important aims for a collaborative partnership that they are unwilling to share, behaviours within the partnership may be viewed as unhelpful or destructive and may put the partnership itself in jeopardy.

This threefold division of aims was then used as the basis of developing a conceptual model of the perceived benefits of partnership for curriculum development. The different programmes and their participants were examined against the model, revealing the perceptual benefits. Differences were discovered between the weighting given to intrinsic and extrinsic benefits and the balance between mission, development and business benefits. The work on benefits is of value because it will impact on the willingness of staff to get involved in collaborative partnerships. Staff will look at the balance between the benefits and disadvantages when deciding whether to become involved. Collaborative partnership is complex and requires skills in communication, management, negotiation, facilitation and perseverance. Staff who possess such skills are a valuable resource and, if this type of work is to prosper, it is important that people want to work in this way. This data suggests that without willing and skilled staff, collaborative partnership working will not happen.

Chapter 7 Barriers to Curriculum Development in Partnership

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the perceived barriers to curriculum development in collaborative partnerships are identified and compared across the six programmes. A model devised from this comparison is then explored in terms of the decisions that need to be taken by the team to facilitate collaboration. The chapter begins with an explanation of how the interviews and questionnaires were used, the model is then explored and the chapter concludes with an explanation of the barriers and their impact on the curriculum development process.

7.2 Analysing the Questionnaires

The data was drawn from both the questionnaires and the interviews. The questionnaire (see Appendix 4) contained two questions relating specifically to the respondents' perception of the barriers that faced the partnerships. Question 2.11 comprised a list of barriers from other studies of collaborative partnerships (Milbourne *et al*, 2003; Tett *et al*, 2003; Clegg and McNulty, 2002). The participants were asked to indicate all the barriers in the list that applied to their partnership and to add any others.

Question 2.12 of the questionnaire asked participants to rank the three most problematic barriers. Figure 7.1 shows the frequency with which each barrier was chosen as applying to each partnership. This is presented diagrammatically in Figure 7.2. The ranked barriers were scored and totalled to give an indication of their importance according to the participants (Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.3). The scoring is used here to indicate the emphasis given by the participants to the barriers. It is indicative, but non-statistical, and shows the relative importance of each barrier.

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 reveal interesting differences in relative importance of the barriers. The most frequently mentioned barriers (Figure 7.2) are those which relate to organisational culture and process. *Differences in organisational culture* is most frequently cited by all categories of participant (HE, FE and Employer). This is followed in importance by other process barriers: the *complexity of organisations*, *communication difficulties*, *lack of organisational flexibility* and *differences in management procedures*. *Lack of resources*, as will be shown later, is seen in the interviews as being very important, yet only ranks sixth in the questionnaire responses. The least frequently chosen barriers were the *inability to deal with conflict* and the *lack of appropriate accommodation*.

Figure 7.3 is a graph of the total score from the three most important barriers chosen by participants and is an indication of relative significance and emphasis. *Institutional culture* is perceived as being of prime relevance and was ranked in the top three by over half the participants. This was also borne out by the results from the interview data. *Communication difficulties* were scored second, although in the interviews it did not gain this level of significance.

The ranking of barriers indicated the importance of each to the participants (Figure 7.3), and the salience of resources became much more evident. *Lack of resources* was scored third and the *difference in funding mechanisms* fourth. This was also reflected in the interviews with resources seen as a very significant barrier to partnership. The graph also shows that barriers which are mentioned frequently may not be seen as very **significant**. This may indicate that although they are present, they either had little effect or they were overcome easily. For example, *complexity of organisations* and *differences in management procedures* are both mentioned frequently but score low in terms of their overall significance.

Prevalence and significance of the barriers became important elements of this analysis and the interviews reflected this. The difference between

Figure 7.1 Table of responses to questions 2.11 and 2.12 on the questionnaire returns

Barrier	Frequency Old University	Frequency New University	Frequency University College	Total Frequency	Total score*
Complexity of organisations	14	2	3	19	8
Differences in funding mechanisms	6	1	3	10	19
Difference in aims	5	3	3	11	7
Differences in organisational culture	14	4	5	23	60
Differences in management procedures	9	2	5	16	4
Lack of appropriate accommodation	2	0	2	4	6
Lack of resources	7	4	3	14	25
Differences in ideologies and values	5	2	4	11	15
Conflicting interests	3	1	2	6	5
Conflict over roles and responsibilities	8	0	2	10	7
Concern over control	4	1	2	7	3
Communication difficulties	10	3	4	17	38
Lack of organisational flexibility	11	3	2	16	19
Inability to deal with conflict	2	0	1	3	0
Other Securing employer involvement ⁺	1	0	0	1	0
Other Distance ⁺	0	0	1	1	0
Other Lack of Partnership development experience ⁺	0	1	0	1	0
Other Fear of criticism by management ⁺	0	0	1	1	0

⁺ These barriers were added by the participants as 'other barriers' in question 2.11 and are only present on one return.

* The total score relates to question 2.12 on the questionnaire which asked participants to rank their top three most important barriers affecting their collaborative partnerships. These were scored to give a total score by 1st Choice (5 points), 2nd Choice (3 points) and 3rd Choice (1 point).

Figure 7.2 Graph of the frequency with which each barrier was chosen by the participants of the questionnaire

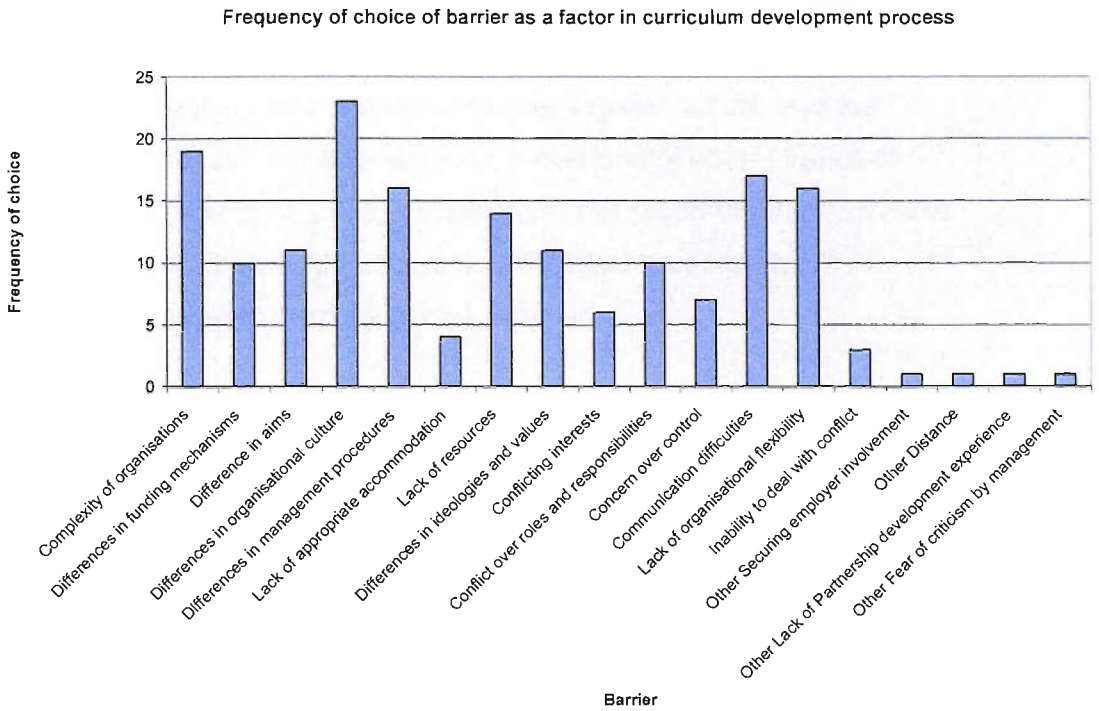
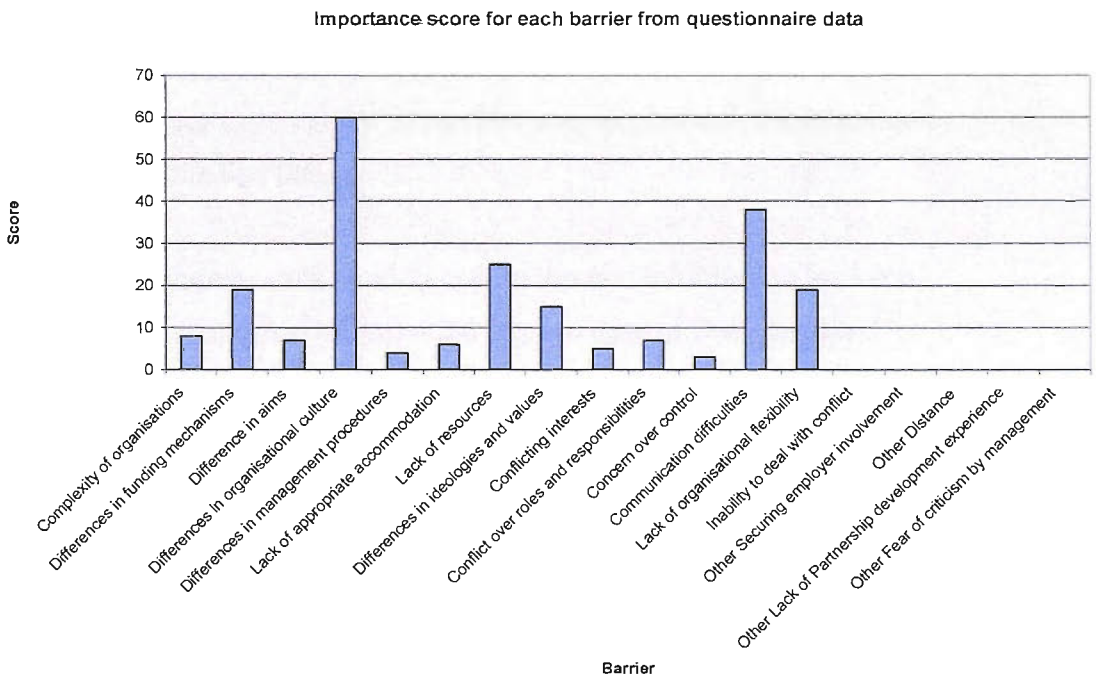


Figure 7.3 Graph of the importance score for each barrier from the questionnaire returns



barriers that were prevalent and perceived as significant and those that were prevalent but not seen as significant was an important distinction which will have an impact on the process of development.

Two barriers in the questionnaire data (*institutional culture* and the availability of *resources*) affirmed the conclusions of other studies of collaboration (Tett *et al*, 2003). However, in this research, the interviews revealed what the participants saw as additional barriers which specifically related to curriculum development.

7.3 Analysis of Barriers from the Interview Data

The interviews provided a rich primary source of data for analysing the barriers perceived by the development teams. Using Nvivo, a full list of barriers mentioned during the interviews was abstracted. Appendix 7 shows a list of the barriers from the Nvivo analysis with a short definition of each one taken from the Project Log. The text was analysed by participant and by barrier for frequency and volume of text as described in section 6.4. Although this gives some idea of the barriers' relative importance in the responses, it does not differentiate those of particular significance. The significance of barriers was explored in the interviews and will be discussed later.

Excel spreadsheets were used to collate the text information for each barrier and participant. This provided a great deal of finely detailed information about the perceptions of individual participants. For example, of all the participants Eva, an employer on the foundation degree in Early Years at New University, spoke least about barriers in the interview mentioning only four barriers: *equity of provision*; *amount of student support*; *vulnerable future*; and *finance* (in score order, from most important). In contrast, Jack, a programme director at University College, had a very high score (157). In total he mentioned twenty three different barriers that he had experienced in working collaboratively. In his

experience *resources* (score 24) and *institutional culture* (22) were the most important. Interestingly, these were the two barriers found in the questionnaire data as the two most significant barriers. Graphs of these two very different participant profiles are shown in Figure 7.4.

The profiles reflect a number of factors. Firstly they reflect the experience of the individual and the nature of the role that they have played in the partnership. In this case Jack, as programme director, was in charge of the collaboration and took the lead. He was intimately involved and would have been made aware of the difficulties in both the partnership and the curriculum processes. For Jack, the success of the programme represented high stakes; it was his responsibility to develop and implement the curriculum and he was accountable for its quality. Eva, an employer involved in the New University foundation degree, in contrast acted more in an advisory capacity and was involved through sending staff onto the training programme. She was less involved and saw herself as a consumer of the product rather than a true partner. From her perspective, if the programme failed to deliver, she could easily look for another training provider. Clearly, a programme director carrying responsibility is likely to see the barriers as more significant than an employer who acts as a consumer.

The profile differences also reflect the personalities of the individuals and how they felt about the partnership. Eva saw it as something she was participating in and which was providing opportunities for her staff but she remained unconvinced that this would provide a long term solution to her training needs:

'As an employer I've not really been involved ... in the course.... I have a member of staff who's doing it and it's the government who's decided what role that course is going to take....but it's difficult to know where the foundation degree stands once my member of staff has qualified. I wonder what form of post she can go for. I suppose that first tranche are the ones who are going to find that out.'

Eva, Employer, NU. (81:235)

Jack, on the other hand, felt overloaded and pressured by his role:

'As for running this programme, I find it extremely stressful ... it doesn't surprise me that some HEIs are running a mile from it. I'm an external examiner at [university] and ... they've dumped it. They've dumped all collaborative provision...'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (106:344)

Although these profiles provide an interesting example of how individuals see the barriers, the aim of this research is to look across the case study at the processes overall. It was important to aggregate the results and this was done:

- By all programmes and all institutions
- By partner type (HE, FE and employers)
- By sectoral type (old university partnerships, new university partnerships and university college partnerships)
- By programme.

The data is shown in the table in Figure 7.5. The scores for the text analysis are shown as percentages to aid comparison across the programmes and institutions. Each column adds up to 100%. The top ten ranked barriers are shown as shaded cells: light yellow for all the interviews, turquoise cells for each partner type (also shown in Figure 7.6), green cells for each programme and purple cells for each sectoral type.

The total list of barriers mentioned in the interviews was narrowed down to the more important barriers which appeared in one of the top ten listings. The rank order was calculated by giving a score of ten points to each of the barriers which are ranked first in one of the lists, nine points to those ranked second and so on. The barriers are shown in rank order in Figure 7.7 with *institutional culture* ranked first and *vulnerable future* ranked twenty fifth.

Figure 7.4 The perceived barriers to collaborative curriculum development for Eva (red) and Jack (blue)

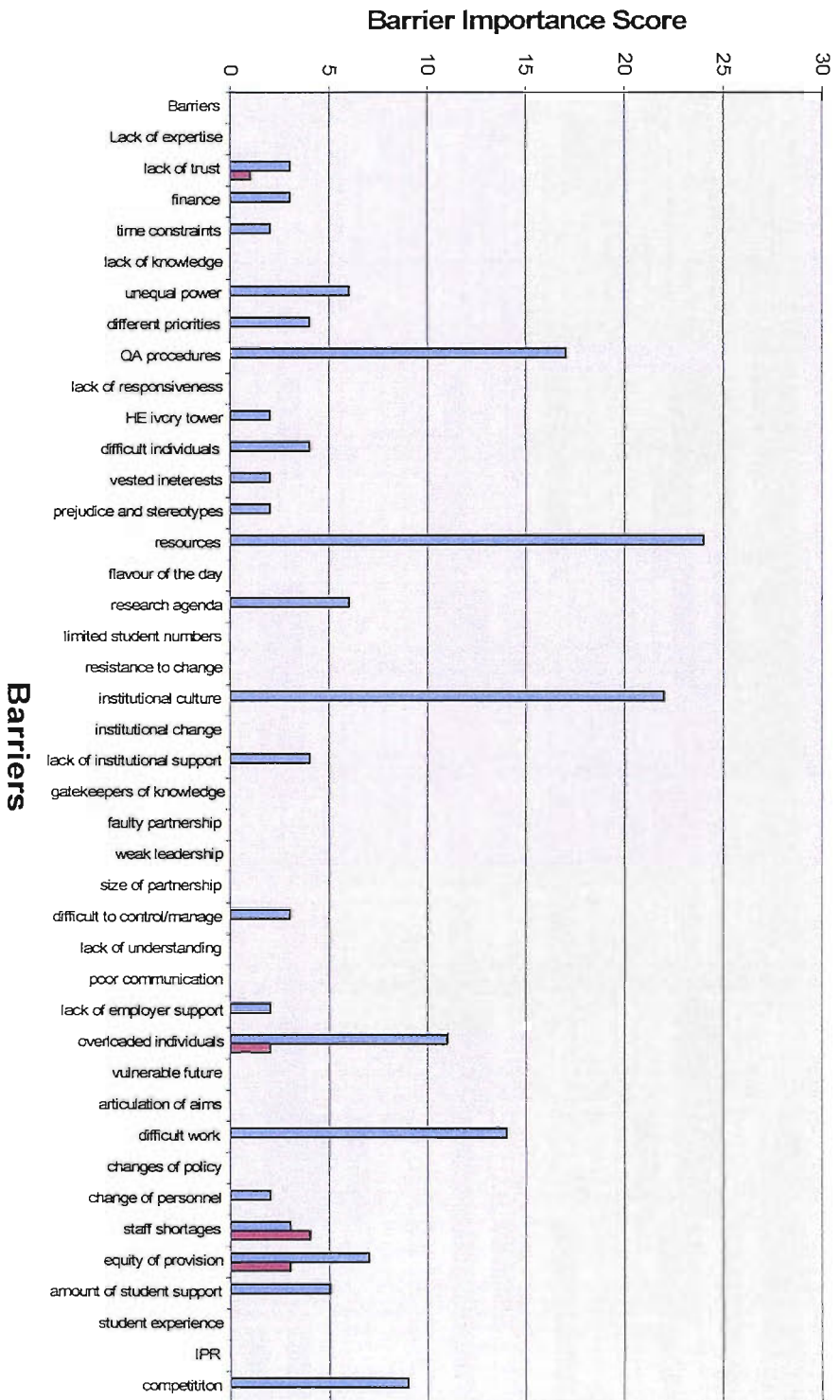


Figure 7.5 Data table of the importance of the barriers from text analysis of the interviews

Barriers	Total	HE	FE	Empl	Old Uni	New Uni	Univ. Coll	CAS	Fd WWC	Business	Fd EY	Fd CYS	PCET
Lack of expertise	3.63	4.62	1.24	2.79	3.74	5.14	1.73	3.73	4.19	5.38	5.85	2.29	2.01
Lack of trust	2.44	2.74	2.13	1.11	2.93	1.71	2.31	2.63	3.55	2.07	3.08	5.14	2.30
Finance	6.02	7.29	4.62	5.01	4.85	7.36	6.74	3.29	5.65	7.87	7.08	8.57	6.03
Time constraints	5.45	4.78	6.93	5.01	5.06	7.19	4.24	1.75	7.10	7.66	4.31	4.57	3.16
Lack of knowledge	0.48	0.63	0.36	0.00	0.71	0.51	0.00	0.44	0.81	0.41	0.62	0.00	0.00
Unequal power	4.16	4.39	5.15	3.62	3.03	6.51	3.66	2.41	3.06	7.87	6.15	4.57	4.02
Different priorities	2.58	3.29	0.71	3.34	3.74	1.71	1.35	4.17	3.87	2.07	1.71	1.71	2.01
QA procedures	8.41	7.76	8.88	10.03	7.79	6.68	11.56	13.16	5.81	7.45	3.08	15.43	12.64
Lack of responsiveness	2.49	1.88	4.62	2.79	2.53	4.28	0.39	3.07	2.10	5.16	4.00	1.14	0.00
HE ivory tower	1.72	0.86	3.02	2.51	2.53	0.51	1.54	0.22	3.87	0.62	0.00	3.43	0.86
Difficult individuals	1.24	1.65	0.53	0.56	1.82	0.00	1.54	1.10	2.10	0.00	0.00	2.29	1.15
Vested interests	1.10	1.10	0.36	2.51	1.42	1.20	0.39	1.32	1.29	1.45	2.15	0.00	0.57
Prejudice and stereotypes	1.58	1.33	2.31	1.95	1.42	1.20	2.31	2.41	0.81	1.45	2.15	0.00	2.59
Resources	5.59	6.66	4.09	3.06	3.13	6.51	9.25	1.75	3.71	6.83	6.77	3.43	10.34
Flavour of the day	0.72	0.86	0.71	0.00	0.81	1.20	0.00	0.00	1.29	1.45	1.23	0.00	0.00
Research agenda	1.24	1.88	0.36	0.00	1.31	0.68	1.73	0.44	1.77	0.83	0.62	0.00	2.59
Limited student numbers	1.58	1.72	1.95	0.00	0.20	4.45	0.96	0.00	0.32	5.36	1.85	1.14	1.44
Resistance to change	2.34	1.72	0.36	6.96	3.74	0.86	1.35	5.92	1.61	0.62	1.23	4.00	0.57
Institutional culture	7.74	8.46	6.04	7.80	7.38	7.36	8.86	7.99	6.61	6.21	8.00	6.29	8.91
Institutional change	2.58	2.04	3.73	4.18	5.46	0.00	0.00	8.11	3.06	5.46	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lack of institutional support	1.86	1.57	3.37	2.79	1.11	2.57	2.50	0.88	1.13	3.11	1.23	0.00	3.74
Gatekeepers of knowledge	0.33	0.39	0.36	0.00	0.40	0.51	0.00	0.44	0.32	0.00	0.92	0.00	0.00
Faulty partnership	1.77	2.04	1.95	0.00	2.22	2.57	0.00	0.66	3.06	3.11	2.77	0.00	0.00
Weak leadership	1.72	1.49	3.02	0.00	3.64	0.00	0.00	0.88	5.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Size of partnership	1.05	0.55	2.66	0.00	2.22	0.00	0.00	0.66	3.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Difficult to control/manage	2.06	1.88	3.37	0.00	2.43	0.86	2.70	0.44	3.87	1.04	0.00	1.71	3.74
Lack of understanding	3.92	3.37	1.95	8.64	3.74	3.42	4.82	4.61	4.03	1.04	5.54	10.29	0.86
Poor communication	2.39	1.49	3.02	5.01	3.94	0.34	1.73	4.61	4.35	0.41	0.62	3.43	0.00
Lack of employer support	2.49	2.19	2.49	2.79	3.13	2.91	0.77	2.85	3.23	2.28	4.92	0.57	0.86
Overloaded individuals	3.25	3.45	3.55	1.39	2.93	2.40	4.82	3.07	2.74	2.90	1.54	2.29	6.61
Vulnerable future	0.72	1.02	0.00	0.56	0.10	1.37	1.16	0.00	0.16	1.24	2.46	3.43	1.72
Articulation of aims	0.43	0.55	0.00	0.56	0.20	0.86	0.39	0.00	0.32	1.04	1.54	1.14	0.00
Difficult work	2.25	2.51	2.13	1.11	2.22	0.34	4.43	4.39	0.65	0.00	0.62	1.71	6.03
Changes of policy	0.24	0.16	0.00	0.84	0.30	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.48	0.41	0.62	0.00	0.00
Change of personnel	3.30	2.43	4.09	5.57	5.36	0.34	2.70	10.31	1.94	0.21	0.62	5.14	1.15
Staff shortages	0.86	0.63	1.78	1.39	0.20	1.37	1.54	0.00	0.32	1.04	0.92	0.00	2.30
Equity of provision	2.44	2.35	3.02	1.95	0.61	3.77	4.43	0.66	0.48	0.21	6.46	2.29	4.31
Amount of student support	2.06	1.72	2.31	2.79	0.81	2.23	4.24	0.00	1.29	2.07	3.38	2.86	2.30
Student experience	1.48	1.49	1.78	0.56	0.51	3.77	0.77	1.10	0.00	3.11	2.15	1.14	0.57
IPR	0.57	0.71	0.00	0.84	0.30	1.20	0.39	0.66	0.00	1.45	1.54	0.00	0.57
Competition	1.72	2.35	1.07	0.00	0.00	3.77	2.70	0.00	0.00	4.55	3.69	0.00	4.02

Figure 7.6 The top ten barriers from the text analysis for each partner type (identified from Figure 7.5)

Higher Education	Further Education	Employers
Institutional culture (1)	QA Procedures (1)	QA Procedures (1)
QA Procedures (2)	Time constraints (2)	Lack of understanding (2)
Finance (3)	Institutional culture (3)	Institutional culture (3)
Resources (4)	Unequal power (4)	Resistance to change (4)
Time constraints (5)	Finance (5)	Change of personnel (5)
Lack of expertise (6)	Lack of responsiveness (6)	Finance (6=)
Unequal power (7)	Resources (7)	Time constraints (6=)
Overloaded individuals (8)	Change of personnel (8)	Poor communication (6=)
Lack of understanding (9)	Institutional change (9)	Institutional change (9)
Different priorities (10)	Overloaded individuals (10)	Unequal power (10)

Figure 7.7 The barriers which feature in the top ten lists in Figure 7.5

Rank	Barrier	Rank	Barrier
1	Institutional culture (C)	14=	Overloaded individuals (R)
2	QA procedures (Q)		Resistance to change (C)
3	Finance (R)	16=	Weak leadership (S)
4	Time constraints (R)		Lack of trust (C)
5	Resources (R)	18=	Competition (E)
6	Lack of understanding (S)		Lack of employer support (E)
7	Lack of expertise (S)	20=	Different priorities (C)
8	Unequal power (C)		Lack of responsiveness (C)
9	Change of personnel (R)		Limited student numbers (E)
10	Poor communication (Q)	23=	HE ivory tower (C)
11	Equity of provision (Q)		Difficult to control & manage(S)
12	Difficult work (S)	25	Vulnerable future (E)
13	Institutional change (R)		

C=Cultural barriers Q=QA barriers R=Resource barriers S= Skill barriers and E=External Environment barriers

This analysis was used to see whether the list of the most important barriers revealed any commonality. From the data in Figure 7.7 the barriers identified as the most significant were grouped in terms of their similarity. Five groups emerge. Two of these mirror the results of the questionnaire analysis: resources (R) and institutional culture (C). However, the analysis of the interview data also indicated three further groupings: QA processes (Q), skills (S) and external environment (E). These five groups have been used to develop a model framework to analyse the interview evidence in more detail.

7.4 The Impact of Barriers on Collaborative Curriculum Development

The five groups of barriers identified in the previous section, have been developed into a model framework (Figure 7.8). Four of the groups of barriers are shown as walls encountered along the development journey. These are the cultural, quality assurance (QA), skills and resource barriers. The fifth set exists because of the nature of the external political, social and economic environment which forms the context for the development. Each of the partners travels on a journey through the collaborative process, overcoming the barriers as they go, and ultimately draw much closer together in their work (blue arrows) as the partnership bears fruit.

7.4.1 Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers are those which relate to the nature of the institutions and the way their priorities, attitudes and values, and modes of operation affect their ability to work collaboratively. In Figure 7.8, the 'bricks' in the wall are the cultural barriers which emerged from the analysis.

(a) Institutional Culture

Each partner organisation has its own distinctive *institutional culture*. This distinctiveness produces an environment where individuals know what is expected of them and how they should respond in different situations. When individuals come together from different institutional contexts each partner needs to reassess how it will operate in the new situation.

These differences in culture manifest themselves in numerous ways and are most challenging where there seems to be a strong similarity between the partners. For example, there is an assumption that, because they are both in education, HE and FE will have a shared culture. Several participants suggested that this wasn't the case and that difficulties arose because of different discourses and practices. Paula explains:

[There are]... very different cultures. It has taken me... a long time to realise that. I can say I need a unit report and ... they [FE] really don't know what I mean.... I'm sure the employers don't understand what HE is doing and why they take so long You can use the words but because the culture's so different, there is a lack of understanding.'

Paula, Programme Director, OU. (80:240)

Many of the participants suggested these differences between FE and HE have become more acute since FECs went through incorporation in the 1980s. Since that time, FECs have become more managerial, market-oriented and financially constrained than HEIs and, as the following quotation indicates, this has had a significant impact on how staff work together:

'... FE Colleges have become very fraught institutions because of the new managerialism that has emerged as a result of incorporation... those institutions now are quite different institutions from this HEI. For instance ...we're constantly trying to get them involved in scholarly activity...[but] ... teaching hours have now crept up to around 900 hours... whereas the teaching commitment for our [staff] is 500 hours. How can they collaborate with us in any meaningful sense when they're teaching to the hilt?'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (64:200)

These differences manifest themselves in the nature of the student experience with a reported tendency that FE uses a training, rather than an educational, model for course delivery. FE staff work in an environment where they must account for their hours. Tasks which are seen as peripheral to teaching, such as attendance at meetings, and which do not immediately have a financial return, are not supported by senior management. As Jack explains:

[Staff in FE]... envy the fact that, in HEIs, there's a different kind of set up... FE has become... almost like an industrial model ... whereas the universities still have a more traditional professional model. There's a clash of cultures. ... I would like to do more things that would mean that collaboration became working together.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (64:202)

Other issues come from the different contractual arrangements. Staff teaching in FECs, on HE courses, remain on FE contracts which are completely teaching focussed and this can have implications for the students' experience.

'... there's a contractual difference between FE staff and HE staff and when the two start working together those differences are exposed and that can cause some difficulties in terms of levels of pay, levels of hours of working, getting time to prepare for HE work in an FE college and being able to get to meetings.'

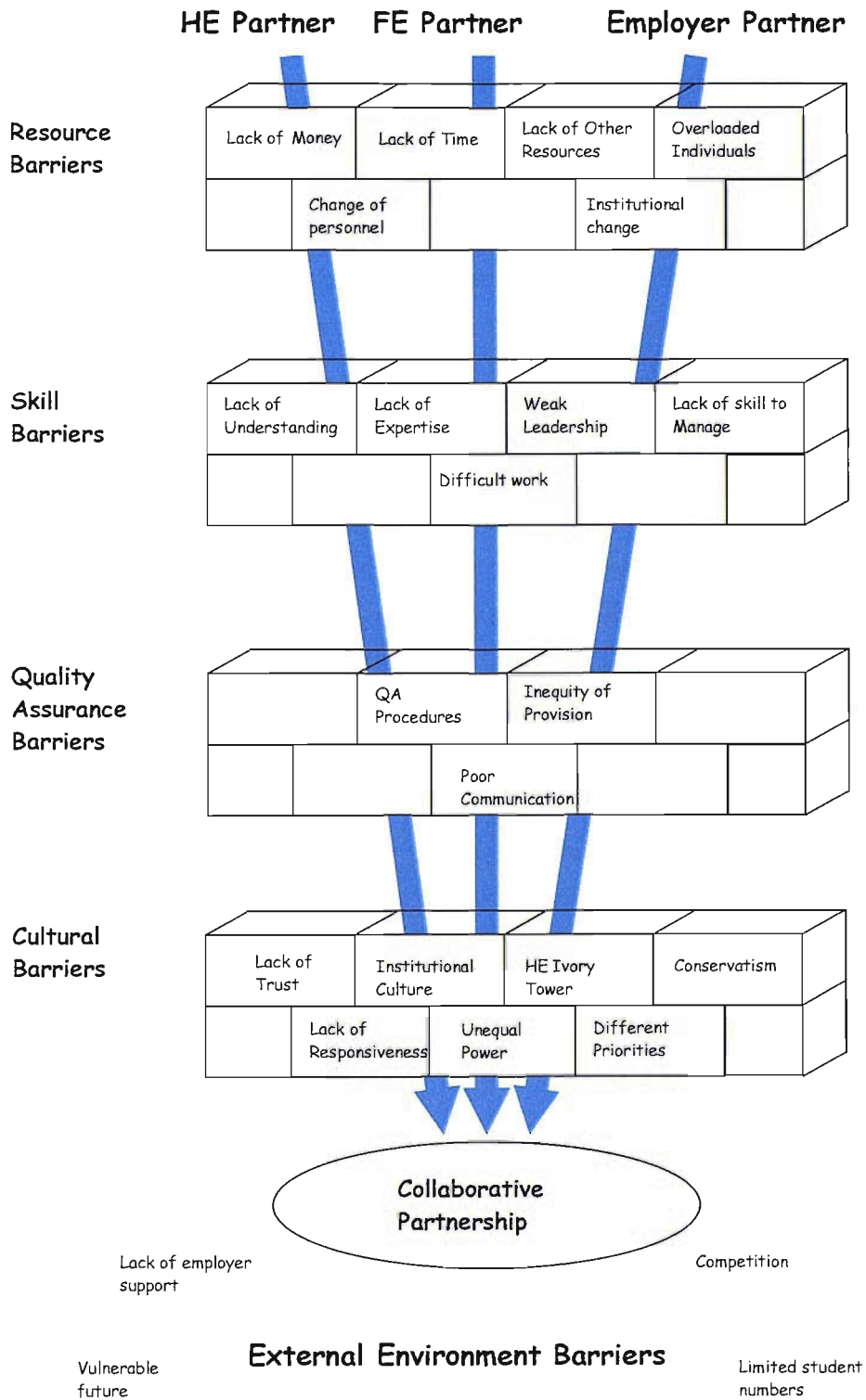
Lesley, Senior Manager, NU. (55:177)

These human resources issues also emerged as a problem when people were appointed to teach on the collaborative programmes. The criteria used for staff selection in an HE environment were reported as different to those used in FE. As Colin explains:

'You are talking about different kinds of staff with different kinds of backgrounds and you can normally get a field for an academic job here [at university college] of people with PhDs and publications and research experience ... and I'm not sure that many FE Colleges would see that as a priority in terms of recruitment...'

Colin, Senior Manager, UC (60:184)

Figure 7.8 A model of the barriers affecting the collaborative curriculum development process



This difference in selection resulted in FECs prioritising getting a good teacher who can also contribute to other elements of the curriculum, whereas the HEI would want to ensure that there was research-led teaching and scholarship. In HE, research would be seen as an important quality measure and a key element of providing an equity of student experience. In several programmes this had been a problem and was discussed in the interviews. Participants in HE described their embarrassment at having to question their FE colleagues about their qualifications. FE participants felt that they were being judged against unfair criteria when they had been recruited to teach on FE programmes and in an environment where research was not supported.

Academic freedom, and the perception of what it means, was also a difference between the two with FE staff used to much tighter control over the content of what they teach through a highly determined curriculum. The lack of prescription of content in an HE programme also caused some difficulties as Pat described:

'One module last year was very vague...so I ended up spending ages emailing Nigel for the interpretation of what they meant... because I wasn't happy until I felt that we were all singing from the same hymn sheet. It might just be me. I'm not a control freak really but [laughter] it's just that I need to know that what I'm doing is right I suppose.'

Pat, FE Course Leader, NU. (72:213)

In contrast, in the HEI, the curriculum was clearly specified in terms of aims, learning outcomes and assessment, but the actual content and mode of delivery was left more to the discretion of individual staff. This did not mean that in the HEIs there wasn't a culture of QA. The HEIs, in fact, felt that they had a much better control of operational matters due to their large size and their experience of being awarding bodies. The following quotation from Mark exemplified this:

'The operational difficulty that has never ever gone away is that [New University] is a very systems-driven university because of its modular programme. So it has very precise ways of doing things

whereas the colleges operate on a much more ad hoc ... way, which you would expect among a relatively small team. So the colleges have never really conformed to our ... documentary and administrative requirements.'

Mark, Programme Director, NU. (68:206)

Institutional culture presented a number of barriers to effective partnership. The barriers came from pre-conceptions of one partner by another partner and the first step to overcoming them was recognition.

Ernest, an employer, described this issue:

'I think that's the problem ... they don't actually seem to recognise that they [the cultural differences] exist and therefore do anything about it. I often think that the thing that really hinders partnership is not the differences, ...but the unwillingness to really understand where the other people are coming from.'

Ernest, Employer, OU. (34:104)

(b) Different priorities

Cultural differences can cause division **within** institutions, particularly in HEIs which are organised on disciplinary lines. This tension reportedly resulted from *different priorities* within the HEI. In the centre of New University there had been a strategic initiative to build regional partnerships with FECs supported by senior managers. However, other staff did not see partnership as a high priority. This was particularly true in more successful departments who were not under financial or recruitment pressure. Paradoxically, these were often the departments most sought after by FE partnerships. The Business School that Henry works in exemplified this:

'Where they [the partnership team] do have a role is...[delivering the]... strategy. I talked about us being reactive...well who am I reactive to? Often it's reactive to the ... Partnerships Team. I assume that one of the things that they are doing is going out ... and talking to people in colleges about what they want. That's an important role...but once something gets underway, the reality is that there isn't a great deal of support [in the departments].'

Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (64:204).

The reality was that at institutional level, the HEI wanted to build collaborative partnerships to deliver the strategy, but the power, expertise and resource to engage in the activity lay in the departments who had their own strategic imperatives (research for example). Staff could legitimately use this conflict in strategy to block collaborations.

This barrier also affected the employers who had *different priorities* between each other or with the educational partners. For example, in the *Working with Children* programme, the employers (LEA Advisers) provided the strategic view of training needs. Had the employer representatives been head-teachers, more operational matters would have come to the fore. The programme director described this tension:

'The Local Authorities had a different set of priorities ... and, had we had more direct involvement from... the people who actually run the ... the schools and are directly responsible for appointing and line managing the potential students, I think that that would have simply added another layer in because schools would have their own concerns and ... drivers.'

Martin, Programme Director, OU. (46:152)

These differences slow down the progress of curriculum development unless they are made explicit and they help explain why a partner may drag their feet or push for a particular outcome. Relationships can suffer. Ernest gave his perspective:

'if we had at the start ... got everybody to describe what their motivations really were and what they really wanted to see come out of it, I wonder whether we wouldn't have made more progress more quickly because I don't think people really have very much of a clue.'

Ernest, Employer, OU. (54:166)

(c) Lack of responsiveness

Frustrations also surfaced due to work priorities. For those in the HEI, dealing with the curriculum development is their highest priority, whereas for the employer, it may be just another thing on their work agenda. Conversely, the HE partner may be seen as unresponsive due to the

bureaucratic nature of validation and accreditation processes. Either way, this may lead to differences in responsiveness. It was described as a barrier both by those who felt that the employers were unable to meet deadlines and by those who felt the HEIs were overly bureaucratic.

Simon described the problem:

'They [the validation procedures] are entirely designed around the needs of this organisation and its quality assurance and that means basically it is slow. ...But when you're trying to develop a curriculum in collaboration with another organisation, what you really need to be able to do is respond to their timetable.'

Simon, Senior Manager, OU (50:151)

(d) HE 'ivory tower' and conservatism

Another barrier identified was the perception FE and employer partners had that the HEI is an *ivory tower* and unaware of external constraints.

This was commented on by both HE and FE. The following two quotations illustrate this. In the first, Henry showed his awareness that the perception of HE may be a barrier to effective partnership and in the second, Michael explains, that in his view HE has a lot to gain by becoming less insular.

'I'm sure that we come over sometimes as arrogant and unhelpful and distant We genuinely don't want to be... even though there's nothing in it [partnership work] for us and even though we can't devote a lot of time to it because there are other things that are more pressing.' Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (108:358)

'I feel that the reputation of the University has grown by being more outward looking in the region than before, it hasn't diminished. It has grown a lot.'

Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU. (24:82).

(e) Unequal power

Another of the cultural elements was the issue of *unequal power* relationships within the partnership and how this was handled. Several participants talked about this and it was always mentioned in relationship

to the HEI assuming the lead. It was an issue of which HE partners were aware. Carol explained from her perspective:

'We enable partners to have a voice at every level because ... being in partnership and collaboration, we shouldn't be a dominant partner. ... That's not right. But equally they are not a client. It's got to be an equal partnership.'

Carol, Programme Director, UC. (98:308)

A number of factors were mentioned as pertinent to this feeling of inequity. Firstly, the increased dominance of the QA agenda has meant that HEIs have instituted more interventionist procedures in validation. As the curriculum carries an HE award, the ultimate responsibility for QA rests with them and inspection makes them publicly accountable. Ensuring quality in a collaborative partnership was more difficult, particularly where an external partner is wholly or partly responsible for the delivery. Each of the HEIs had validation procedures for the programme and accreditation procedures for the partners. They were also responsible for the assessment and the appointment of External Examiners. These procedures led inevitably to a feeling that some of the work was being judged by the HEI. Jack saw this as a major issue in maintaining relationships:

'FE partners [originally] saw themselves as 100% involved in a partnership with the HEI. There was no hierarchy. A lot of the barriers that there could have been, weren't there. Some of that antagonism did surface when we [the HEI] started to pull in the reins ... and we tried to reassure them that we were only dictating because of the public accountability agenda.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (64:198).

This problem reached its peak during the validation procedures as the HEI had greater knowledge and was, with external membership, running the judgement process. The team brought the programme to the validation event explicitly to be judged against quality criteria. Even though there are university members of the development team, the process is heavily weighted against the other partners feeling empowered. Mark from New University explained how he felt:

'I would say that they [the FECs] were not involved as equal partners and I think that this is where the atmosphere can go wrong from the beginning, because the validation panel is essentially [New University] with a few outsiders thrown in, and the supplicants asking for the course to be validated is the college and the course team.'

Mark, Programme Director, NU. (110:335).

A second aspect where inequalities of power surfaced was in the funding. In all but one programme, the central funding of students occurred through the HEI, with it retaining a proportion to cover central expenses. The issue was made more acute because the models used by HEFCE and the LSC have a different approach and there was a lack of understanding by the partners of how the funding worked.

(f) Trust

Finance was mentioned by several participants as a 'trust' issue and was responsible for some bad feeling. An example occurred in Old University where there was disagreement over payment for student support; included in the fees in HE and attracting additional funding in FE. Simon explained:

'The particular one we experienced is about funding people who needed extra learning support and in the FE system ... you actually claim extra funding for students who need extra support and the HE system simply doesn't do that.... Even when we'd explained the system in detail to our ... partners ... they did not believe us. They actually thought we were keeping money back which we should have devolved to them.'

Simon, Senior Manager, OU. (54:165).

This differential in financial terms was seen as a very persistent problem affecting the levels of trust and was not easy to dispel:

'I think that one of the difficulties ... was the perception of FE that they were very poor and the university must be very rich and therefore would have lots of money to throw at this...and when it turned out that that wasn't the case there was some surprise and... a certain amount of mistrust and the idea that the University was holding back on lots of cash did continue for some time.'

Martin, Programme Director, OU. (46:152)

The trust issue was one which was mentioned by several participants and echoes the work of Bottery (2003). It takes time to build up the sort of trust which enables problems to surface and be dealt with effectively. Partnerships set up in a context of established relationships are able to make more rapid progress and participants suggested that this is best done by institutions collaborating on a number of fronts as part of a strategic alliance so each new development builds on the work of the last:

'So strategically ... we need to actually know people in higher education and they need to know us before we can progress grand plans and in doing that we also need to gain the confidence of people in higher education.'

Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU. (12:34).

By working together, people began to experience each other's working environment and to understand better the cultures underneath. Prejudicial attitudes were broken down by good experiences (or reinforced if the experience was bad). As the relationship matured, and people began to work effectively and co-operatively, trust grew and the work became easier but getting this far relied on early barriers being overcome. Fiona described this process:

'And that's where your confidence comes. So if college x is always efficient and always gets its stuff in on time, when the quality has been assured, where the teaching's been assessed, then there's a level of confidence that builds up. But if it's always difficult... and I'm the programme leader in the HEI, well I can't be doing with working with college x and I certainly don't want to develop another programme because I've got too many other things to do.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (44:142)

The impact of institutional culture on the development of a productive collaborative partnership has a great many facets and can make or break it. As will be shown later, these cultural barriers were found in all the programmes and provided a perennial backdrop to collaborations.

7.4.2 Quality Assurance Barriers

(a) QA procedures

The second group of barriers related to the QA procedures. Any undergraduate programme development requires the validation of the course and its delivery. Two QA processes are involved: validation of the programme and accreditation of the delivering institutions. The accountability for these processes lies with the HEI, even though the FECs have their own QA processes to monitor programme quality. The requirements of external quality audit have led to bureaucratic procedures which require programme teams to get prior approval to develop the course, prepare the documentation in an agreed format determined by QAA, and then seek validation through a programme approval process. In collaborative programmes the partners who are going to take part in the delivery also need to be accredited. This is a process in which the HEI looks at the capacity of the partner to deliver the programme to students and provide an HE experience for them. All the participants agreed that these processes were important but the interviews revealed that parts of the process were perceived as barriers to progress including a feeling that the processes were slow, cumbersome and mysterious (at least for the employers and FECs). In the following quotation Lucy described the frustration she felt about this process which, to her, seemed to lack flexibility and responsiveness:

'I think we do realise that once the validation document is written that you have to adhere to it but ... we are not fully aware of all the constraints that [University College] may have. It can be very frustrating sometimes when you want to make changes ... to be tied up in institutional formalities.'

Lucy, Employer, UC. (66:198)

The HEIs recognised this lack of transparency for external organisations and made efforts to help them through it but it added to the workload, time and cost of the process. Neil explained how he saw the problem facing external organisations trying to work with HEIs:

'I guess they would be concerned at the pernickety nature of QA procedures and that might be a barrier to development because of the need for precision and getting over the QA hurdles and ... understanding those QA processes is hugely complex for external organisations.'

Neil, Senior Manager, OU. (56:164)

In some situations, the *'pernickety'* nature described above is a response to the programme team having to gain support from within their institution. This was true both in the case of the Old University programmes and for the HND in Business at New University. Collaborative work can suffer from a lack of institutional support within HEIs where staff may see the work as time consuming, difficult, peripheral and distracting from research. The QA procedures can be used as a way of blocking or discouraging those who want to engage. This was felt to be true in part within Old University and those involved had to make sure that there were no QA issues that could be used to cause problems. The following quotation from Patsy shows that this affected how the team approached the validation:

'... there are bound to be people within our own organisation who say... is it really business that we should be getting involved in? So, as much as ensuring we have the quality, we have to consider that there may be opposition in our organisation ... [and] present a case that this work is as valid as anything else that the University is involved in.'

Patsy, Outreach, OU. (64:188)

These processes are at the heart of a major cultural difference. HEIs are internally accountable to staff within the institution who can question any programme development and prevent it from happening if they have misgivings (even if it is part of an agreed strategy). In FECs what is taught is an 'oven-ready' curriculum which has been developed and validated through the examination boards and is then 'sold' to the colleges as a product. Unless staff also work for the examination boards, they see none of the preparatory validation work. Add to this, the line management model used in FECs and staff here are much more

constrained than their HE counterparts. This issue surfaces again when the **skills** element of the model is discussed.

Where partnerships had been operating for a long time, for example the PCET programme, participants commented that the relationship had suffered as the QA processes had tightened up. Originally, the QA had been developed by the partnership itself and everyone felt equally responsible. The changes brought about by inspection and audit had produced a more hierarchical system where the responsibility and accountability lay with the HEI. This is a factor in the *unequal power* relationships considered in the last section. The HEI participants talk about the need now for a more managerial approach to be taken which worsens relationships within the partnership.

[The early curriculum development]... was collaborative in the truest sense of the word, they wrote the curriculum with us. Slowly but surely, because of QAA ... we've had to tighten the reins more ... to ensure that the ownership of the qualification is [university college's]. It's still taught in partnership but the quality assurance has increasingly become a role that [university college] has played.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (30:836).

Jack went on to explain how for his consortium this change in the status of the FE partners had led to considerable anger as their influence was diminished. The partnerships have had to reduce this by involving FECs more in other ways. This issue will be looked at in detail in Chapter 8 but it has included readdressing the balance, developing an associate tutors' programme and involving the FECs more in the QA processes appropriately:

'...we are asking FE partners to...meet our quality structures. ... go into an FE College who've always done it their way and say to them, from now on you've got to do it our way. It takes some handling. With one College we've sat down and we've revised our quality procedures in tandem which has been a good process.'
Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (72: 224)

Gradually there had been an acceptance that the QAA required HEIs to develop QA in their relationships with FECs. In reality, FECs are faced with complying with their own QA procedures for inspection through Ofsted or the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) **and** complying with the HEI procedures. This leads to, as Tim said, '*over-egging the pudding*' as the delivering institution tried to comply with both sets of requirements and the HEI tried to cover every QA angle to satisfy QAA's inspection of collaborative arrangements. Most staff delivering HE in the colleges are also teaching on FE programmes and may be caught up in two differing sets of demands over processes such as marking and moderation, peer review, student evaluation and performance indicators.

One sensitive area of QA, mentioned by a majority of the participants, was the accreditation of staff in the FECs or workplaces to teach HE programmes. Ensuring that these people were able to teach on an HE programme is the responsibility of the HEI even though they did not employ them directly. Usually approval involved the HEI monitoring the curriculum vitae of the staff. However, in no programme in this research were the approval criteria made explicit, as this exchange with Carmen exemplifies:

Ros

'You say that you provide cvs, what are they looking for in those cvs? What are the criteria that they are using?'

Carmen

'I have no idea, we just provide cvs, we tend to keep them in the quality file and they are up-dated regularly but I suppose it is normal to see what experience has this tutor got.'

Carmen, FE Course Leader, NU. (96: 285)

A particular issue related to the employers delivering the programme. The work-based trainers had seldom got the same kind of educational background that would be found in HE, FE or in an Education Authority. Approving and monitoring staff was a more difficult process as the HEI had to ensure that the students were being taught by people who understood the needs of an HE programme and the employer having to

provide evidence to satisfy this. The following quotation from Tim explains how time-consuming this was:

'... the business of registered tutors was a problem... I am teaching on the programme but I deliver a one or two day input on audiology ... However, I had to complete the paperwork process to be registered as a part-time tutor... So I think that's a bit over the top, simply because it involves everybody in a lot of work.'
Tim, Employer, OU. (56:169).

(b) Inequity of provision

However, from the point of view of the HEI, getting this process right was important to ensure that student experience across the partnership was equitable. *Equity of provision* is a major quality issue for all those involved in partnership. This does not mean that all students will get exactly the same experience but each centre must provide a similar level of expertise, support and resource. Some participants identified that there were differences in expectation between those from HE and FE related to the amount of student independence expected, the nature of the learning resources and the way that staff approached their teaching.

'Yes there is a difference in mode of delivery. They [the FECs] tend to be very practical ... which is great. We want that as well ... but they don't always have the level of academic, theoretical background to underpin that, so they tend to skate over sometimes and they don't go deeply enough into a subject.'
Carla, Programme Director, UC. (94:277)

The partnerships were all aware of the importance of trying to minimise these differences and had put into place measures to improve the equity of provision. Resources were monitored closely to ensure the students had access to HE materials. They were also provided with Athens accounts and access to electronic resources through the Internet, and they all ran their own virtual learning environment. Each institution had a system for bringing the delivery team together to plan the teaching and provided staff development, induction and moderation of assessment. They all also had procedures for ensuring that administrative processes such as interviewing and registration. Monitoring the provision across the

partnership was seen as an important quality issue for the HEI and in each case there was an identified role/person who undertook this process.

The *equity of provision* was particularly an issue in the work-based learning provided and all programmes had some form of mentorship role to support students. Colin, whose role was to lead on academic partnerships explained:

'You have the problem of making sure there's equitableness between employers, which takes considerable effort amongst programme teams.... You also have the problem of just making sure that employers play fair and don't just use students as cheap labour.'

Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (86:266)

The employers also recognised that this was a problem:

'What I worry about is where people are based because so much of the time is in the work situation. I think it's one evening a week that they're at the University. What worries me is that on the ground experience, what they are actually getting and what they are using as role models.' Eva, Employer, NU. (39:110)

Ensuring the equity of experience made the QA element a burdensome and costly task for the HEI. The funding differential between a full time programme based at the University and a collaborative programme is not sufficient to compensate institutions. Added to this, the funding that does accrue has to be shared between all partners involved in the delivery. We will return to this when we look at resource barriers.

(c) Poor communication

Finally, *poor communication* was mentioned in nine interviews as a barrier. In part this was about the difficulty of getting hold of busy people whose job was only partly to manage the collaboration. This was felt to be a particular difficulty by the employers who said that the communication by the HEIs did not allow for their other duties.

'Day to day communication, it's actually not strong at all. I think that they would also level that at my team because we are all very busy. Trying to actually get hold of somebody is sometimes very difficult when there are crucial matters that you want to discuss.'
Lucy, Employer, UC. (66:198)

This was a problem felt as keenly from the other partners too. The HEIs and FECs also felt that there was a problem with timely communication. Face to face contact through meetings was problematical, especially the number, frequency and length of meetings needed for collaboration. The interviews indicated that the issue of communication was one where you really can't please all the people all the time. However, poor communication did not feature as highly as it has in other studies where it was identified as one of the major barriers to collaboration (for example, Tett *et al*, 2003) and it did not rate as highly in the interviews as it did in the questionnaire returns. It is difficult to know why this is so, but maybe people think communication should be a problem but in practice it was not as difficult to overcome as other barriers.

An interesting element of communication, mentioned by four participants, was the issue of the different partners having their own discourse and misunderstandings happening through words holding different contextual meanings. The following two quotations demonstrate how this can affect expectations, trust and understanding:

'I think we have our tribal language that's different and our expectations are different and what we expect from students is different.'

Carla, Programme Director, UC. (56:163)

'... and that kind of cross over of language is just indicative... of how very easily we can have very false impressions of what the constraints are and what the motivations ... and I think that time invested in unpicking all of that would be time well spent...it doesn't feel productive to begin with but I actually think that overall it would work much better.'

Ernest, Employer, OU. (54:166)

This issue of a lack of shared understanding was particularly acute where there was a similarity between the partners as in the foundation degrees where each partner came from the education sector and there was an assumption that words had identical meanings. Partnerships ultimately had to make time to clarify what was meant.

7.4.3 Skills Barriers

The third group relates to the skills sets required by the development team (Figure 7.8). There are two groups: those that relate to the expertise of the team to engage with the curriculum; and those that relate to the ability of individuals to work collaboratively. The skills sets can impact on the curriculum either during the formative stage or as it is implemented.

(a) Lack of expertise

The *lack of expertise* that can exist was mentioned in conjunction with a number of aspects of the process. A main issue came from the different academic backgrounds of FE and HE staff which is recognised by both sectors. Generally, but not exclusively, FE staff have lower level qualifications than their HEI counterparts. However, where this is combined with a lack of experience of developing curriculum, it becomes a barrier to progress which needs to be addressed. The reasons for concern include the worry that FE and employer staff may not have the range of skills or depth of understanding themselves to give the students a true HE experience and important graduate skills such as criticality and research techniques might be missing. In addition, few of the FE or employer staff will be research-active and participants from each sector recognised this as a potential problem and shown by the following quotations:

'We have had a lack of trained tutors really. The people that we have here ...they've obviously got the experience of training dogs but they haven't got the theoretical knowledge. So by taking them on as tutors... from an academic side, they were quite weak.
Jackie, Employer Administrator, OU. (48:140)

'I think concern that staff... are of an appropriate level. A University, as you know, can be quite snooty about all that, quite wrong in my opinion but... it does happen. There have been concerns about whether staff are suitable.'
Lesley, Senior Manager, NU. (50:162)

A number of participants noted that the *lack of expertise* showed up during the development phase of the curriculum. The explanation given was that the nature of the National Curriculum and FE programmes have changed the experience of teachers. In the 1970s and 1980s teachers were trained to develop curriculum from first principles and many gained experience in national projects such as the Schools' Council programmes. Since 1988, teachers have been given a prescribed curriculum in which the teacher develops schemes of work. Developing a new foundation degree using a prospectus which had the briefest of guiding principles was a challenge. The expertise of the HEI members who were more likely to be experienced in this was relied on heavily:

'We are just emerging from a delivery mode where you're not only given the recipe, you're given the ingredients and you're also given the guarantee that it creates a meal. All of which are false ... but five years of that is enough to stop people actually being at all equipped ...it's very hard for those of us who were thoroughly engaged in curriculum development both at a local and national level to understand and work with people who've never experienced that.'
Ernest, Employer, OU. (40:122)

There was a need for partners to be trained in the art of curriculum development before they could take a full part in the process. It was more a lack of experience, than a lack of expertise and participants suggested that problems continued into the implementation phase with issues around marking standards, assignment setting and the preparation of examination papers.

(b) Lack of understanding

As well as a lack of expertise, many participants mentioned one or more of the partners having a *lack of understanding*. This manifested itself in

several different ways relating to the academic work: in the standards required of HE work, in the academic skills pertinent to a graduate, and in understanding students' needs. For example, Colin felt that it was a problem getting the employers to understand what was required in terms of maintaining academic standards:

'it's more difficult to communicate standards to employers. It's not that employers fall short of standards but it's more difficult to communicate academic standards with the employers doing the training.'

Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (76: 236)

This conflict of education versus training was most acute when the education partners dealt with the employers, but there was also a reported tendency of management within the FE sector viewing the programmes in terms of training courses. In one college, the programme leader indicated that the senior management expected the HE programme to be no more resource intensive than the FE vocational programmes and made no distinction. This was difficult for staff, trying to put into practice notions of equity of provision across a broad consortium, who found themselves in under-equipped rooms, overstretched in terms of their teaching hours and with poor library resources.

'I think part of the problem was the notion that it was just another course and no allowance was made for it being an HE course.'

Travis, FE Course Leader, UC. (62:182)

In a course which involves work-based learning, the employers may be involved in the supervision, mentoring and assessment of the students. They have a good understanding of the experience of what it is like to be a student on the programme. In her interview Lucy spent a lot of time explaining the *lack of understanding* there was in the education establishments of the demands on the students. She felt that these students experience very different pressures and that this is not recognised by the HEI in terms of delivery or assessment. The cohort is different:

'And I think also... the rest of the institution don't always understand the differences of off-site students and on-site students.... We have a very high proportion of women on the courses, we have an age range that probably spans from 21 to about 48, we have a variety of cultures, most people are married with families, so that kind of class base is very different from the usual kind of...[18 year old]'

And therefore the curriculum needs to be different:

'I think that's something that institutions don't always get their head around, that ...by cornering this market they might actually have to re-think about the way they do assessment or the way they plan the timings of things.'

Lucy, Employer, UC. (60:180 and 62:186)

The reverse of this is also an issue for the teaching team. There may be an assumption that students coming on to an HE course are ready to embark on rigorous academic study. Employers may sponsor students who are excellent practitioners but they may be lacking in recent academic experience. The amount of student support required at the start may be underestimated. In her interview, Carla explained that the students frequently required additional support particularly in developing their criticality and their academic research skills:

'The critical thinking, the reflection, bibliographies, they didn't know how to write a bibliography. So all of that was a real cliff face on how to do it and we're hoping that ... they will be able to get to a much higher standard within year two.'

Carla, Programme Director, UC (110:327).

Other skills sets mentioned related to skills required by those working collaboratively and those who lead such projects who required not just the expertise in curriculum development but also the skills of team building and an understanding of the business of each partner. They needed to be good communicators, team workers and skilled in project management. They also needed to have the confidence of their institutions who they represent, they needed to be able to communicate the team's needs to their colleagues, and the needs of their institution to the partnership. They needed skills in negotiation, networking and working with group politics. Several of the participants indicated that

these skills sets are rare and that the government should act to grow the skills base if collaborative working is going to become more embedded in policy. Fiona explains:

'I think there is a ...need for ... staff development in the field of partnership working I think it is an expanding field. Loads more money in the next two or three years, but where these people are going to come from? Who is going to do all this work? ... They're certainly not going to be experienced unless we poach them from somebody else's project.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU (58:186)

(c) Leadership skills

Leadership skills for partnership are even rarer. Leading a collaborative programme requires someone who has the academic skills to develop and deliver a programme, the QA skills to validate the programme and accredit any partners, and team leading skills. The danger is that the leaders are chosen for academic reasons and not necessarily their skills working collaboratively. Weak leadership can seriously impact on the progress that is made as explained by Richard:

'I can remember the ... markedly desultory meetings where Professor George from the [university] would be there, two or three Principals and myself and the odd representative from one of the Trusts, who you hadn't seen before and probably wouldn't see again. And we seemed to be getting nowhere...and we weren't really getting anywhere until they brought in this expert.'

Richard, FE Senior Manager, OU. (26:76)

Weak leadership can also lead to problems escalating especially if the way that problems are to be resolved is not discussed and explained up front. Even in a collaborative partnership, or maybe especially in a collaborative partnership, decisive action needs to be taken when problems occur to ensure that relationships between the partners do not deteriorate. This was recognised by a number of the participants but had often been learnt by experience:

'...I think all of us were guilty to some extent of actually not taking a lead. It actually needed somebody to actually say, right I'm going to grab this by the scruff of the neck and sort it.It is like a franchise, if it was a MacDonalds joint that was out of control the Head Office would sort it because it would be doing damage to MacDonalds across the board So that ideally, ... that's how it should be sorted.'

Simon, Senior Manager, OU. (64:197)

One of the ways that some of these issues can be overcome is by each partner trying to understand the demands faced by the others. The centrality of the collaboration to the core business will be different: for some it will be their whole job but for most it will just be one of a myriad of demands:

'I think when you're staff in higher education, you tend to forget that it is just exactly the same here. That there's lots of other things going on that you actually have to contend with ... I think it's not a full understanding of what our jobs are. Although we all work on the foundation degree, it's only a minute part of all the things that we do....'

Lucy, Employer, UC. (80:242).

This sentiment was echoed by many participants, including those in HE, and is an extension of the cultural differences between the partners. It can be helped by better understanding, good communication, and, on occasions, exceptional leadership skills. However, these are sufficiently rare to be worthy of comment when they do occur:

'There did seem to be a greater willingness to come round the other side of the table and look at it from other people's perspectives. Martin has been ace in that, just ace and exceptional in terms of really wanting to say, look I've got my problems but they are my problems and I don't want to make them your problems. You need to know I've got them but now let me try to understand your problems. That's good partnership.'

Ernest, Employer, OU. (34:104).

(d) Difficult work and a lack of management skills

Finally, a large number of the participants talked about collaborative curriculum development as being exceptionally hard work and *difficult to control and manage*. Many factors were mentioned and some of the interviewees spent a long time cataloguing the difficulties. The difficulties encountered included managing the clashes of cultures; providing support for non-traditional students; dealing with the complexity of the collaboration across a wide geographical area, and managing the delivery processes across different locales. Several people said that it was a much more difficult task than managing a traditional undergraduate programme of full-time, 18-21 year olds, taught on a single campus and that it was significantly more stressful (five participants talked about thinking of giving up because of the demands of the work):

'...all it's brought me is a pile of headaches ... and I ..find it extremely stressful. And I envy people who work on...mainstream undergraduate programmes,... Because the stress involved in this is 24 hour a-day stuff. ... The stress is huge and I'm not sure how much longer I can go on doing it.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (106:340).

Although resilience is needed to cope, the element of resources is also pertinent. It was a widely held feeling that the resources were unavailable to support these programmes and did not reflect the difficulty of the task. The barriers associated with this will be explored in the next section.

7.4.4 Resource Barriers

As would be expected in a public service, the *lack of resources* to support collaborative work was seen by all participants as a major barrier, not just in terms of money but also staff, time and other resources such as library books, access to IT and space.

(a) Lack of money

The HEFCE funding model for teaching, based on student numbers and subject banding with payment following students, means that new developments must be financed from existing resources. HEIs can only get funded places on new programmes by viring numbers from programmes that are closing down or by applying for additional student numbers (ASNs) which at the time of this study were only available for foundation degrees.

A successful bid for ASNs provides a new income stream and money can then be used to pay the FE partners for delivery. However, where the programme does not attract ASN funding, the partners can only be paid by transfer of resource from the HEI which represents an actual loss. In addition, the cost of developing a curriculum collaboratively is expensive due to additional costs: management, accreditation, additional meetings, mentoring, staff development and student support to name but a few. Many of these funding issues were mentioned by HE participants.

The transfer of funding for student numbers from the HEI to the FECs for delivery involves an agreed proportion being held back by the HEI to cover central costs while the rest is allocated to the FECs according to recruitment. The exact proportions held back and distributed vary according to the generosity of the HEI, the learning resources provided centrally and whether the HEI is engaged in the delivery. However, the amount of money for collaboration (even though there is a premium for some of the foundation degree provision) is insufficient to cover the costs of providing the programmes. Colin explains:

'I was at a ... national meeting which made the point that in some cases the HEIs are holding back 50%+ and there have been some real... squeals of complaint from FE Colleges. ...I mean the normal set up is ... 25% on average ... to hold back. I don't think there are any FE Colleges that don't feel that that's too much and any HEI that says that's not enough because there just isn't enough money to go round.'

Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (92:284).

Several participants said that that they were reassessing whether it was worth continuing despite it being important in delivering both workforce development and WP objectives.

'It is incredibly expensive and I think you have got to ask yourself if it's worth it and I think the only way you can do it, is actually to take a long cold hard look at how you do things for all your students.'
Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (72:238).

Fiona articulates the dilemma that, even if it is valuable educationally, a programme cannot run if it constantly loses money – unless an institution is willing to subsidise it internally for altruistic reasons. She also indicates that there may have to be changes in the way programmes are delivered for all students. This is an important point and will be looked at in more depth in Chapter 8.

The cost of the development phase is a considerable one that all partners have to face. Several participants said there was an initial expectation that development funds would be made available by the HEI. With the exception of the pilot funding available for the first foundation degrees, there was no development funding and this caused tensions between the institutions. For example, in Old University, pilot funding had been made available for the first foundation degree in Health Care but this was not available for the Working with Children programme. Consequently there was a breakdown in trust as the FECs felt that the HEI was with-holding funding from them. Neil explains:

'I think that there was a lack of understanding of the basic financial and resource parameters in the design of the programmes which meant that, particularly the FE partners, did not understand how the development ... was going to be resourced. They assumed that there were pots of money in the University which there simply were not.'
Neil, Senior Manager, OU. (44:128).

At the time of undertaking this research, although the HEIs were committed to developing collaborative curriculum, each of them was considering whether it was sustainable. Basically the HEIs felt that the

funding was being spread too thinly and the student recruitment did not warrant the amount of effort involved.

The departments within the HEIs who are at the sharp end of developing the curriculum, also have to demonstrate their own financial viability. The departments have to make decisions about which programmes to operate and which ones to cancel and collaborative programmes are expensive to run. In no case did the HEI provide premium funding to the departments running the programmes.

'when widening participation first hit my radar screen which was about ...1999, that was my immediate suggestion was to say make resources follow WP student and you will get action. It hasn't happened. ... no, there's no premium for us getting involved in widening participation activities.'

Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (34:104).

The result of this is that departments who engage with collaboration may be delivering programmes that run at a loss to the HEI.

'Financially I suspect it has been highly disadvantageous for the University. I mean it costs the Business School money. It's had a fifth of my time for six years.'

Mark, Programme Director, NU. (154:467).

It is not just the HEIs that are questioning the financial advantage of running collaborative programmes. The FE sector has also been encouraged to work more in partnership, despite over a decade prior to this working in competition. Again, despite seeing the benefits to learners and the wish to develop HE provision, FE managers were questioning the sustainability of partnership work. As Michael explained:

'There is a view ... that the cost of partnership work can't be borne any longer. There is an assumption by policy makers ... that partnership work is the best thing to do, so we'll do it but there's opportunity costs ... and there's a view that we might have reached a limit now ... Certainly in further education there's a strong debate ... about ... rationalising the partnership agenda'

Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU. (26:90).

The fundamental differences of operation make a seamless FE/HE sector seem a long way off. An example is in the management of workloads. Academic workloads in HEIs tend to include an allowance for meetings, administration, staff development, scholarship and research, whereas in FECs the workloads make little allowance for these (which are key elements of delivering HE). Jack explained how this made it hard to organise meetings, staff development or moderation events:

'They won't do that voluntarily even if it's a good educational idea. I think some of them would but they're told that they can't be absent for three hours without some accounting of that ... so I've got some money to do that. That's how we ... get them out of their colleges to let them see what's going on elsewhere'
Jack, Programme Director, UC. (100:318).

When the money does get transferred into the FECs, evidence from this research suggests that it does not always flow to support those staff and students working on the HE programmes. It was reported by FE participants that little of the funding reached the point of delivery.

'As far as I know, funding comes from [University College] but it appears to disappear into a black hole ... and we have to fight to get books on our shelves.'
Sarah, FE Lecturer, UC. (63: 182).

However, this isn't always the case and it does depend on the practice in individual colleges. For example in one college delivering programmes for Old University, Tania remarked that she had seen positive benefit of the HE funding in providing additional teaching resources:

'There's no doubt about it that the start-up money that we had enabled us to buy some really lovely things like a torso model that we've never been able to afford before for the degree.'
Tania, FE Lecturer. (58:172).

Resource issues do not just affect the educational partners, the employers also indicated that there were financial pressures from partnership. They also have to find funds, for example, to pay for meeting time and mentoring work. There are also costs of implementing the

programme. Employers must decide who pays for their employees to undertake the course: should the individual member of staff fund themselves or are they sponsored by the employer? Practice varies widely:

'The greater bulk of the...students generally are self-funded and a lot of them lose a day's pay to be on the programme. London Borough of [name] is different in that they pay for all students and support them while they are on the programme.'
Carla, Programme Director, UC. (38:109).

All the foundation degrees in this research were training relatively low paid workers. In some cases, staff had their fees paid, got time to study and were provided with some-one to cover their work but in others, the staff had to pay their own fees and had to study in their own time. The assistance provided by Government itself is also very variable from no assistance, to students being provided with grants for childcare, help with fees and lap-top computers. The lack of clarity for these part time students in terms of forthcoming increases in fees and their access to loans exacerbates the problem. Already students are facing great difficulty in staying on the programmes because of financial pressures:

'There's just no money for this group of students It's where the government has been very short-sighted. They've put all this in place but they don't give the support to students who really need it. They're not 18 year olds who think: 'who cares about having an overdraft?' These people really do care because they've got dependents ..., so every penny counts.'
Carla, Programme Director, UC. (46:133).

Where the primary aim was to address a workforce need, there was an expectation that students would be supported by employers. In this research, the degree of support varied considerably. At one end of the spectrum, the employers in the Canine Assistance Studies programme helped develop the programme, were involved in delivery, provided mentorship, took part in programme management, provided paid support for their employees and paid the university a per capita fee. Although the students, who were also full time employees, had a very heavy workload,

they were supported by their employers in every way. This is an unusual model for financing collaborative programmes as Patsy explains:

'With this partnership it is unusual in that [assistance dogs' charity]... was paying the institution whereas most of our programmes ... it's the student ... who actually pays.'
Patsy, Outreach, OU. (52:152).

The disadvantage was that it was a very heavy financial burden on the employers and the programme was at risk as the business was undergoing retrenchment and a change of management. The award was under threat from those who saw it as expensive and encouraging staff losses as those who became qualified sought promotion opportunities elsewhere. The organisation had set up a review to look at the business case for continuing:

'We've had a Practitioners' Development Review going on which is ... looking into ... the Diploma and whether it meets the business needs. I think they do want to keep this programme on but obviously they are looking at the expense side and the time commitment it requires.'
Jackie, Employer Administrator, OU. (114:338).

At the other end of the spectrum some employers provided little support. In the Fd Child and Youth Studies, there was a range of support for the classroom assistants. Carla explained that where the decision rested with the individual school the amount of support varied considerably even within an LEA:

'That's a personal agreement ... between the student and the school. ... there's a huge range. Some of them are released and they are paid for that day .. and the supply cover is provided, some lose a day's pay and the schools don't provide anyone, ... and anything in between.'
Carla, Programme Director, UC. (44:121).

The variability of practices increased the difficulty in providing initial advice for prospective students about financial and time commitments. Even where the target audience was a public service, the decisions about staff support were taken at a local level, usually by the line manager.

From the education providers' point of view, this variability of employer support makes the market unpredictable and marginal.

(b) Lack of time

Time is another constraint, mentioned by almost all participants. Travis and Jack mentioned the problem of FE staff themselves being unwilling to give their own time due to the heavy workloads.

'The FE Colleges have become very different types of institutions ... and a lot of the staff are very demoralised because of that and ... find it very difficult to give up their time They are exhausted. It's an irony really that we have a much bigger quality agenda ...and they've got much less time to actually engage with those kind of activities because their teaching commitment is so high.'
Jack, Programme Director, UC. (64:202).

From the education perspective, there are two other *time constraints* which were mentioned. The first was the problem of the heavy workload of running a collaborative programme. Carmen had just given up as leader for the HND when she was interviewed and she gave this as the reason for the decision:

'The coordinators really do not have enough time and with all the number of issues that come up.... Time and at this level we really just do not have it.'
Carmen, FE Course Leader, NU. (114:339).

The second problem is finding time for staff who have the skills to undertake curriculum development. Freeing these people up so that they can be involved in collaborative work is an early issue to be addressed. As Fiona explained:

'But in terms of curriculum development, it's got to be staff time hasn't it? They've got to be the right staff with the right approach, the right quality and enough time to actually do it properly.'
Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (52:168).

The issue of time also affected the employers. For some, especially from SMEs, this was a challenge and several participants mentioned this as a major barrier and said that it was easier working with large businesses or

public services who can free staff up or who have dedicated training staff.

Paula explained the difficulties facing the employers:

'Because it wasn't .. their sole job. The curriculum development was an added extra on top of everything else that they were doing... and even though they were interested in it, finding the time to do it was extremely difficult.'

Paula, Programme Director, OU, (72:216).

(c) Overloaded individuals

The impact of these *time constraints* was to increase the perception that collaborative curriculum development is done by *overloaded individuals* who find it difficult to fit in all the tasks required. This particularly affected FE since Incorporation. The staff in FECs were teaching many hours each week during term time and could not, or were unwilling to, add to that burden. In HE, the teaching loads are lower but the staff had additional demands from research and scholarship. Added to this, the rhythm of the year was different, with FE following the school year whereas HE staff had a leave allowance to take during student vacations. Also FE staff usually teach on a range of programmes and cannot adopt the rhythm of HE work.

'Many of the staff here are now teaching... on a very wide range of courses at different levels. So you could have a colleague who's teaching level two GCSE type work, level three A level work and some higher education work, so they haven't really the time to concentrate just on the higher level work.'

Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU. (18:56).

All participants talked about overloading but the perception was that HE staff were not as loaded and had resources to put into collaborative work. In fact, the areas that tended to get involved in collaborative work in HE were those under more pressure to diversify due to the nature of the discipline or under-recruitment pressures. Lesley explained:

'Some of the areas where we have looked to work most closely with FE have been in areas which are pretty stretched ... But nonetheless the resources base in HE is perceived in FE as being

hugely luxurious and pots of gold under the bed and that we swan around having a good time and thinking great thoughts.'
Lesley, Senior Manager, NU. (56:180).

(d) Lack of other resources

The disparity of resource base was mentioned by almost half the participants. Students were entitled to all the services provided by the FEC and the HEI. The front-line support was provided by FE tutors but additional support came from the HEI through the programme director and student services. Information technology was provided through a link to the HE and FE staff and students were able to access electronic learning resources through a virtual learning environment such as BlackBoard or WebCT. The students also had access to the resources of the FEC. There was a degree of doubling up with, in theory, both institutions making provision but, in fact, ensuring that students had a similar level of service provision to their counterparts working on the university campus was difficult. Several participants remarked that levels of resource in the FECs were not as good as in the HEI. Within the HEIs, the central services' staff had to re-think how they were going to deliver across a number of different campuses. For instance, registration and allocation of IT, library and Student Union accounts had to be done in a different way, usually at additional cost:

'It needs to be recognised that programmes that work in collaboration ... have different requirements from central services to those that are more traditional ... these aren't your ordinary 18 year olds. A classic example ... was the sheer distance that you had to come to register for your computer account. Would you come from [London Borough]?'

Carol, Programme Director, UC. (60:64).

The provision of adequate library resources was another challenge. Decisions about the level of resource provided within the delivering institution and whether students should have to access library through the HEI directly had to be made. Clearly electronic resources alleviated this but there was still a need for books. In all cases, some books were

provided in the delivering institution either by book purchase or by the use of book boxes from the HEI.

Even when there is agreement upfront about what needs to be provided to ensure that the students get a proper HE experience, the resources do not always seem to be used in the FEC to help in delivery. Both Travis and Sarah who work in different FECs mentioned that money had not filtered down to them at the point of delivery:

'I've had a lot of problems with getting the resources which I have tried to rectify. Things like getting a data projector and computer for teaching. This year I've tried to get some money out of the college but it has been difficult despite the fact that the college gets 120 or 130 grand a year.'

Travis, FE Course Leader, UC. (62:182).

(e) Changes of personnel and institutional change

Of all the resources, teachers are the most expensive and most critical element of ensuring the students' experience. Another barrier experienced was the instability of staff during the curriculum development process. This was mentioned as a particular problem because of the very high rate of staff turnover in FECs and the complexity of management across the collaboration meant that any change of staff is unduly disruptive. When a member of staff leaves, both the FEC and the HEI are involved in recruiting a replacement and the new person has to be inducted into both. This placed a particularly heavy burden on programme directors:

'The turnover in staff in one of the local colleges... 20% of staff have left this year. 20%, that's a national scandal, so actually managing a programme like this when all that is going on is tough.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (106: 346).

In the Canine Assistance Studies programme, the issue of staff turnover became very acute when both institutions underwent major structural change at the same time. Staff on the employer side left, partly because

of organisational change and partly because of the promotion of individuals. The HEI staff were also affected by changing roles although the key person, the programme leader Ashley, stayed in post which provided an essential element of continuity. Changes of personnel can be particularly disruptive in collaborative provision. Patsy gives an example of this:

'...because there have been some staff changes ... and they didn't think to inform us... when these changes occurred. ...I became aware that their qualified library liaison person had moved jobs ... so we had to make it clear to them that this is a requirement of the validation of this partnership that you actually have properly qualified staff.'

Patsy, Outreach, OU. (76:224).

It also impacted on delivery as new people had to get used to the institutional practices.

Clearly with rapid turnover, there is a concern that critical information may be lost when the staff leave. Institutions kept programme records of meetings and there was a validation record, but with a high level of turnover, the institutional memory of the collaborative process can become fractured. Max explains:

'We need to make sure that the stuff that we've got up here in our heads is actually ... accessible. So what we're doing is making sure that we have got master files for each unit and those files contain the timetable..., the lesson plans, the assessment and to augment those files I've got box files of handouts'

Max, Employer Lecturer, OU. (83:246).

The above quotation emphasises the importance of the teams keeping full records of the collaboration but this had the disadvantage of making these programmes particularly bureaucratic and costly.

Changes in the internal environment can produce barriers to collaboration for curriculum development but the threats can also come from the external environment as we shall explore in the next section.

7.4.5 External Environment Barriers

The external environment is an important element of the context within which the curriculum development occurs. Ideas for programmes come from market analysis and perception of need which may be originated by any of the partners. Government policy assumes that employers will become engaged by identifying skills gaps in the labour force. In this case study two programmes were originated by employers (Canine Assistance Studies and PCET) where there was an identified need for assistance dogs mobility instructors and qualified FE lecturers. In the other examples, the programmes originated by the HEI and/or the FEC identifying a gap in provision. The three foundation degrees were supported by LEA employers keen to develop training for classroom assistants. The Business programme did not have direct employer involvement but had indirect input through the EdExcel examination board.

Employer engagement was a key element of the external environment which impacted on needs-led curriculum development and it was an essential element of foundation degree development. Even though there was evidence of direct employer engagement in five out of six programmes, the interviews revealed getting this was difficult. As Fiona explained, employers don't see what they are going to gain:

'It would be very exceptional for an employer to be proactive. One way that I've been trying to tackle it is through organisations like Education-Business Partnerships... to actually raise the awareness of the employers about what the potential might be ... because I don't think the employers really see what's in it for them.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (30:94).

Employers also found it difficult to plan their workforce needs far enough ahead to take advantage of an HE programme taking two years to develop. This short-termism is particularly acute in SMEs where releasing staff to undertake study is a big commitment. Fiona explained:

'as far as employer partners are concerned, the difficulty is ... getting them to see the long-term gains ... particularly smaller employers. ... the public sector, they can work long term because they know they're not necessarily going to go out of business ...so ... for your employers, you've got to try to offset that short-term.'
Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (78:260).

Where this short term view can be overcome, there is another barrier which comes from the fear that once the employer has invested in the training of a member of staff, then they will be poached by a competitor. Once again this is a more acute fear in small organisations.

Even in the public services getting employer support is difficult. In the developments to train classroom assistants, the employers who took the lead were the LEA advisers who were able to engage in long term workforce planning. Each of the teams remarked on how difficult it was to get the engagement of the head teachers who were ultimately responsible for releasing and supporting staff to attend the programme. As local authority control continues to weaken, this forward planning is likely to become more acute.

'I'd like it if there were more head teachers that we could call on that could actually roll up their sleeves and get involved in this but that ain't happening really at the moment. And that is a change from where we were back in the 80s. I think then head teachers were interested in taking some of these things forward but life's changed for them as well.'
Ernest, Employer, OU. (46:142).

The changing nature of the external environment meant that all partners were wary of how viable these programmes would be long term. They were working in new and untested markets and there was a concern that the time and effort required to set up the curriculum would not be repaid through continued buoyant recruitment. In the HEIs there was a worry that FECs were moving in on their territory by getting help to develop programmes before running them themselves. Colin articulated this concern:

' If it's a partner programme, the HEI has no way of knowing how long it's going to run the programme for, however, our Articles of Cooperation give a year's notice on either side. We are currently setting up a programme with one FE College and they may want to run it twice and then run it themselves. They may want to go to another partner, we just don't know.'
Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (96:296).

In the case of the HND Business there was a worry that numbers were declining as the institutions at the bottom of the hierarchy get a much smaller market share. In a mass HE market place with over-supply in some subjects, the programmes taught in FECs are perceived as being of lower status than those delivered within an HEI. If there is competition for students then the HEIs can drop their price (usually expressed in proxy measures such as students' A level grades) and poach them away from the partnership provision:

'...a few years ago we were normally enrolling round about 20 students ... and the majority of those would carry on through to the second year. Unfortunately now we're even struggling to get up to 15 students So why?... predominantly a lot of students are actually able to get onto degree courses with some of the grades that they have and so HND doesn't seem to be seen as the safety net [it was].'
Carmen, FE Course Leader, NU. (10:26).

Partnership work is developing a more competitive regional pattern as institutions vie with each other for market share. The HEIs are in competition for student numbers and for FE partners. FECs, who worked competitively after incorporation, are having to work collaboratively, and the traditional maps of provision are being redrawn as a more dispersed model of HE delivery is being forged. Regionally, institutions are having to define their businesses more carefully and look for complementarity to ensure viability.

The external environment barriers are going to vary from place to place and from time to time. They are going to be a product of the geography, the number of providers, the markets, and political, economic and social factors existing at the time. Even if these particular external factors (*lack*

of employer support; vulnerable future; competition; and limited student numbers) are not present in other case studies, there will be external contextual barriers which must be taken into account.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the evidence from the questionnaires and interviews has been analysed and five main groups of barriers to collaborative curriculum development have been identified: resources; skills, QA; institutional culture and the external environment. Each of them impacts on the curriculum development process and partnership in different ways and the model framework (Figure 7.8) shows that as the partners work together to overcome the barriers they are drawn closer. The model helps explain the multi-factorial nature of the barriers facing collaborative partnerships and this chapter has explored how the process of curriculum development can be affected by them. Chapter 8 will consider in detail how the teams in this research sought to overcome the barriers and produce viable collaborative programmes.

Chapter 8 Overcoming the Barriers: Developing Effective Partnerships

8.1 Introduction

In chapter 7, data was analysed with respect to the barriers facing collaborative partnerships. In all the programmes, the teams overcame these barriers and undertook a successful validation. This chapter focuses on the analysis of the positive aspects of partnership which promote good quality curriculum development. A better understanding of the processes of overcoming obstacles will assist those developing new partnerships to avoid pitfalls and to adopt mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

8.2 Developing the Analysis: Identifying the Solutions

This analysis adopted the same procedure using Nvivo and the technique described in Section 6.4. The responses were analysed for the frequency and volume of text for each solution to produce a score of the data indicating the emphasis given across all interviews. The results were combined into a ranked list with the highest scoring solution ranked first (Figure 8.1). An interesting element of the analysis is how solutions were emphasised by the constituents of the sample of participants. Using the data, a table was drawn up to show the results of the text analysis by constituents (Figure 8.2). The table shows three cuts of the data. The first three data columns show the data analysed by sector (university college consortia/ new university/old university - Figure 8.3). All the figures are shown as percentages to provide a graphical comparison (Figures 8.3-8.5) with the colour of the bars being reflected in the colour of the cells in the table. The other two cuts are by partner type (HE/FE/Employers – Figure 8.4) and by role of the participants

in the development teams (senior managers, programme leaders and teachers – Figure 8.5).

Figure 8.1 Ways of overcoming the barriers to collaboration identified from the interviews (in Rank Order)

Solution	Rank	Solution	Rank
Partnership involvement	1	Effective Leadership	12=
Strong management	2	Developing student support	12=
Senior management involvement	3	Commitment to aims	14=
Effective communication	4	Mutual understanding	14=
Staff development	5	Flexibility	16
Getting the right team	6	Institutional commitment	17
Having a Memorandum of Agreement	7	Experienced team members	18=
Developing trust	8	Win-win	18=
Ensuring quality	9	Evaluating successes and failures	20=
Clarity of purpose	10	Viability of the programme	20=
Budgeting time	11	Outreach	22

This analysis together with the detail from the interviews suggests that some of the solutions are of prime importance in developing effective partnerships in the development of undergraduate curriculum, in particular *partnership* and *senior management involvement*; *strong management* and *leadership*; and *effective communication*. These will be looked at in detail in the following sections. Other solutions, reported as effective by the participants, will be considered as additional solutions that may be useful in particular circumstances.

Figure 8.2 Perception of significance of solution by participant group

Solution	SECTOR			PARTNER TYPE			ROLE		
	University College	New University	Old University	HE Participants	FE Participants	Employer Participants	Senior Managers	Programme Leaders	Teachers
Developing trust	4.7	4.2	6.3	4.1	14.1	2.5	4.1	4.7	5.6
Experience	2.2	0.5	1.6	1.7		2.0	3.4	1.3	
Sen. Man. Involvement	7.4	13.6	11.1	11.6	8.6	8.0	13.8	10.7	6.6
Leadership	1.4	2.3	5.7	3.3	1.6	4.0	3.4	2.7	4.1
Evaluate Success			1.6	0.3		2.0	0.6		2.0
Ensure Quality	6.9	7.5	1.4	6.6	0.8	1.5	3.4	8.7	0.5
Viability		2.3	0.3	0.9			1.9		
Getting Right Team	1.6	6.1	11.4	4.9	9.4	9.0	3.4	8.3	9.7
Commitment to aims	0.8	3.3	4.6	2.2	2.3	5.0	2.2	1.7	2.6
Partnership Involvement	16.5	8.0	12.0	13.2	4.7	17.6	15.0	12.0	13.8
Clarity of purpose	1.1	1.4	7.3	3.6	6.3	1.5	4.1	3.0	1.5
Strong management	13.2	7.5	9.2	10.8	12.5	7.5	6.3	12.3	14.8
Memorandum of Agreement.	4.1	8.9	4.3	5.5	1.6	6.5	5.9	4.7	5.1
Communication	11.3	6.1	7.3	7.7	14.8	8.5	9.4	7.7	9.2
Institutional Commitment	2.2	3.3	1.1	2.2		2.5	3.8	2.3	
Budgeting time	3.8	0.9	4.6	3.3	4.7	3.0	2.5	4.7	4.1
Win win	2.2	0.5	1.6	1.4	2.3	1.5	1.6		3.6
Outreach			0.8			1.5	0.9		
Mutual understanding	3.0	3.3	2.4	2.4	4.7	3.0	1.6	2.0	2.6
Student support	4.4	4.2	1.6	3.6	3.1	3.0	2.5	5.0	2.0
Staff development	10.4	10.8	2.4	8.3	7.0	5.0	5.6	7.3	9.2
Flexibility	2.7	5.2	1.1	2.2	1.6	4.5	4.7	1.0	3.1

Figure 8.3 Perception of significance of solution by sector

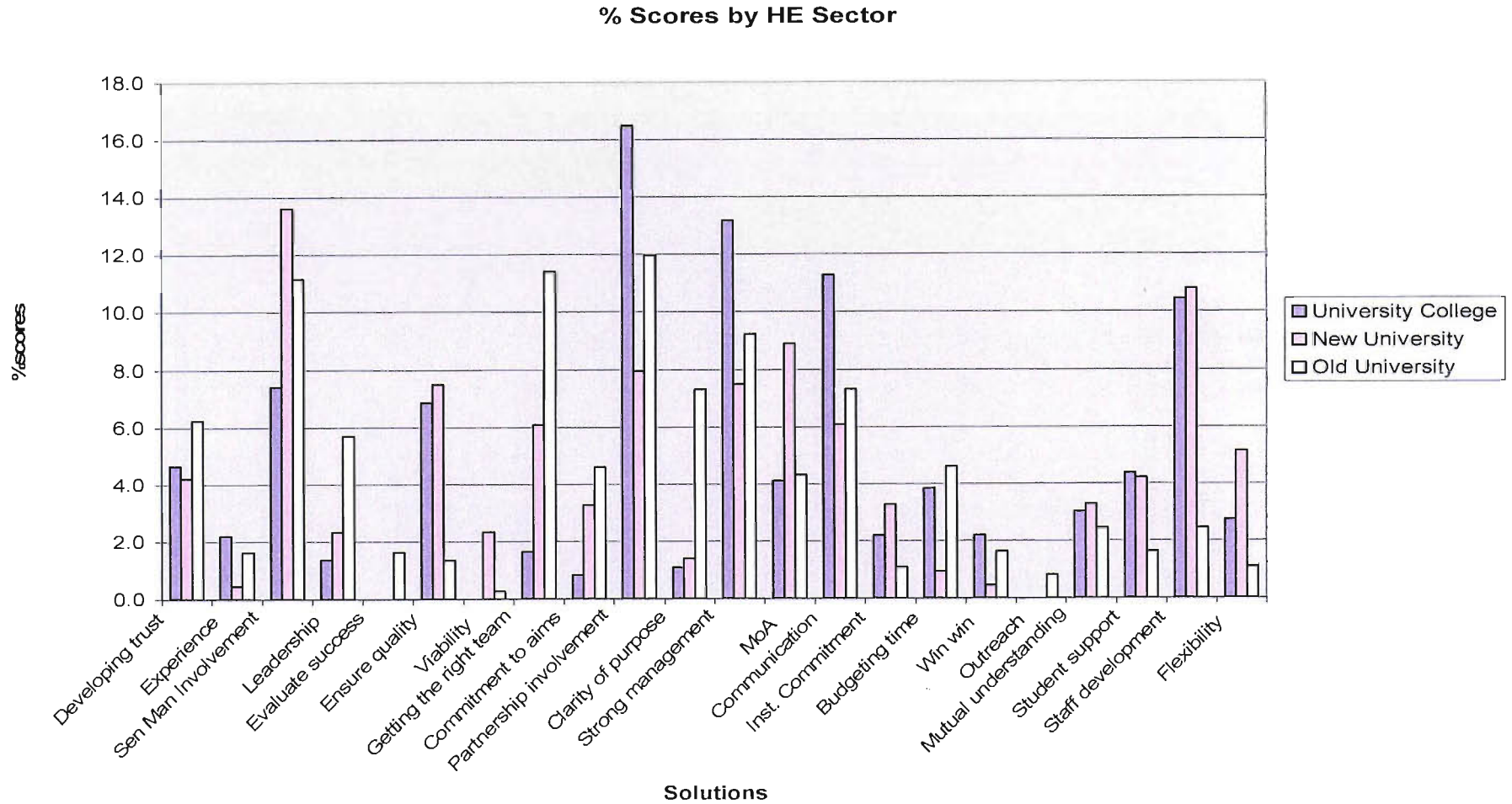


Figure 8.4 Perception of significance of solution by partner type

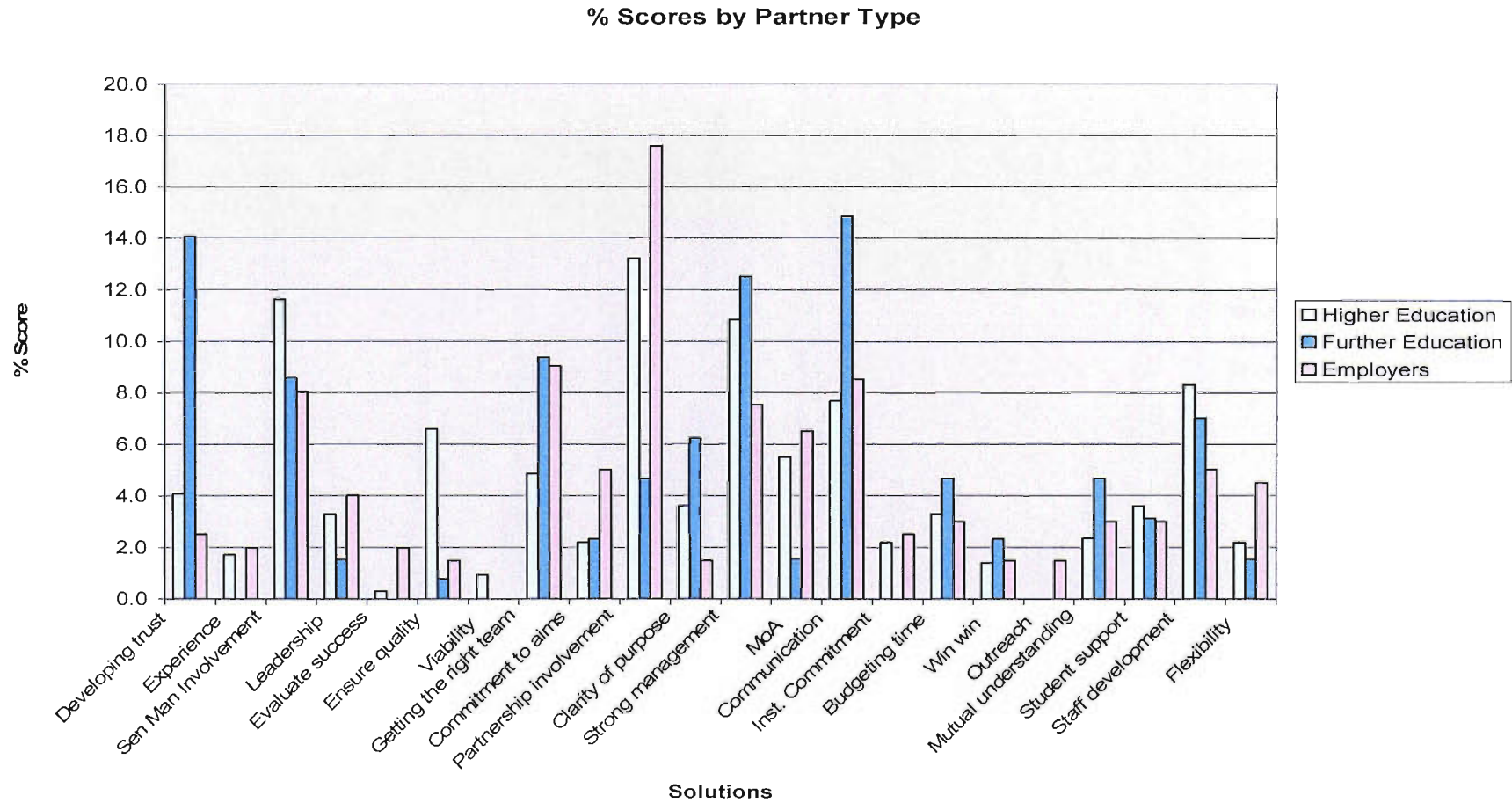
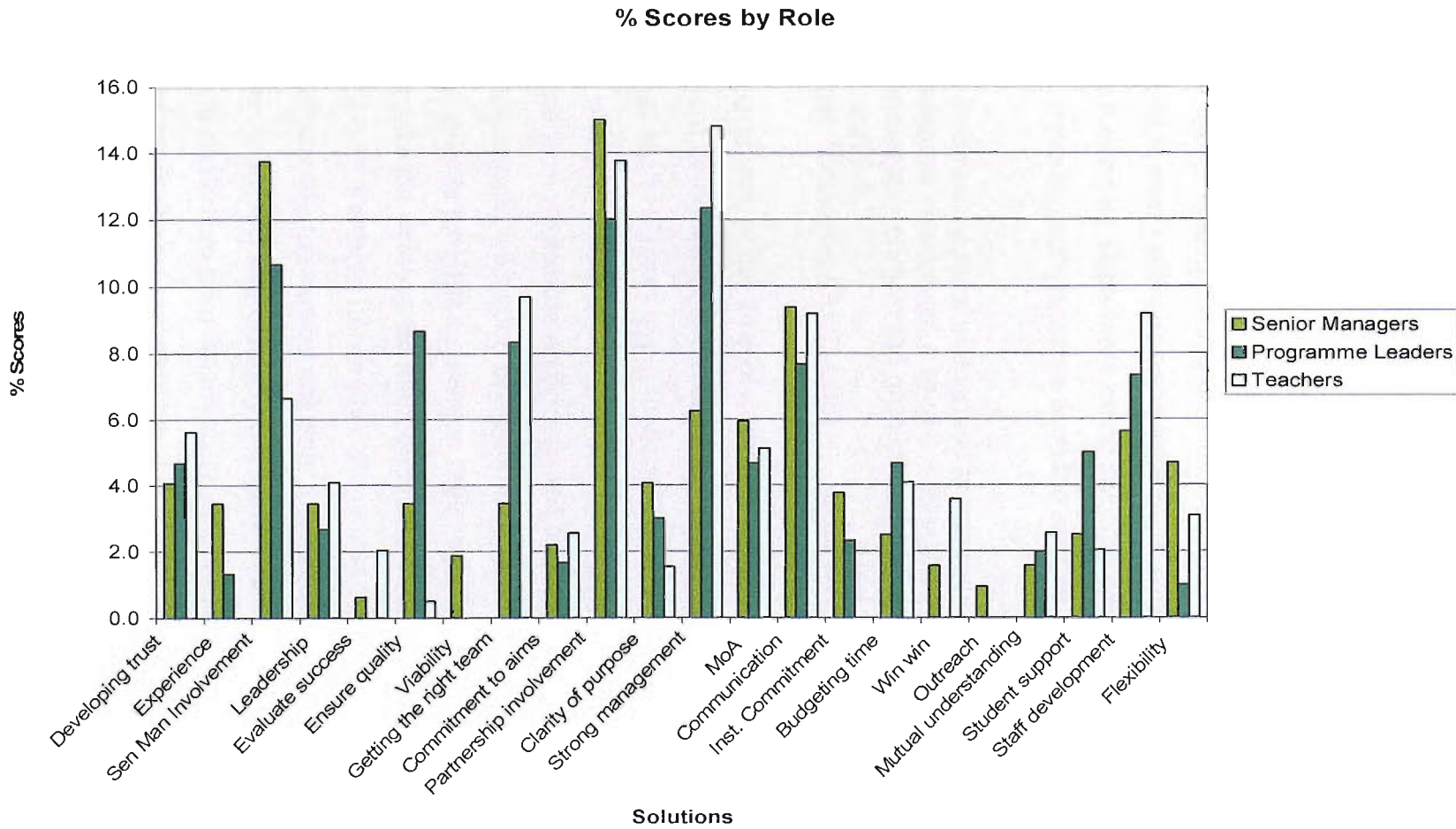


Figure 8.5 Perception of significance of solution by role



8.3 Effective Solutions Employed in the Partnerships

8.3.1 Partnership involvement

Partnership involvement ranked as the most important solution identified by the participants overall and, in the more fine-grained analysis shown in the graphs, ranked first or second for all but two of the groups (the new university consortia and the FE partners). The most common reason offered by the participants was that good partnership developed where the partners were involved in every process and where there was a lack of hierarchy. This was achieved by all partners being involved early on and being committed to the project's purpose from the start as Ernest explained:

'It is to do with a local willingness to engage both those who are in a responsible position to ... think... I think it's a willingness to start comparatively early in the process rather than get it all sorted and then consult.'

Ernest, Employer, OU. (14:38)

In each programme, at the time of undertaking the research, strategic alliances were being struck to increase the amount of collaboration. It was reported that each HEI was trying to identify a network of FECs and employers with whom they would work. Government policy was encouraging partnership and more flexible and needs-led curriculum which was rewarded through, for example, allocation of additional student numbers. It was seen to be a high priority for HEIs to develop their regional network. This may explain some of the differences mentioned and shown by the graphs (Figures 8.3-8.5). For both university college and old university, *partnership involvement* was the top ranked solution. In university college, working in collaboration to extend and diversify the market had been in existence for a long time. Its curriculum offer was heavily weighted towards the development of professionals in the local workforce. It is not surprising that *partnership involvement* was ranked highly – it was part of their survival strategy.

For old university, *partnership involvement* was again the highest ranked solution. The contextual situation here though was reportedly very different with the university having to forge regional relationships after an extended period of focusing more on national and global markets. For new university, *partnership involvement* was only ranked fourth. In this case, the university had already begun to develop its network of associated colleges and was more focused on how to make them work (a possible reason for the lower ranking than other solutions relating to implementation). Many of the high level institutional agreements were already in place through political dealing by institutional heads, which Henry colourfully describes:

'One other thing that I know is going on... is the level of institutional shmoozing ... I've been invited to dinners organised by the Vice Chancellor where you get in all the principals of all the colleges and you get on together and establish relationships, sniff each others backsides and ... there is that sort of supporting, sponsoring of partnership working which is being done by the management team.'
Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (86:280)

As has been shown in Chapter 7, the evidence suggested that barriers can sometimes occur where one partner assumes control (often the HEI due to their accountability, their experience at developing undergraduate programmes or the tacit acceptance by FE of a hierarchy of influence). Many of the participants explained that it was good partnership to ensure that **all** the partners were engaged at every stage.

'I think, with the benefit of hindsight it's pretty clear that a lot of the barriers were more or less accidentally anticipated ...[it]...could have been that FE Colleges didn't want to be pushed around by the HEI ... and you see it wasn't set up like that. It was a pure partnership where the FE Colleges wrote the curriculum as much as we did.'
Jack, Programme Director, UC. (64:198)

And, as Simon and Fiona explained in the following quotations, all partners should be of equal status and equally engaged:

'I think that's number one...ensuring that the ownership of the knowledge base is truly partnership driven. ... you have to have a win-win situation for all partners. There are no second division partners. All partners are of equal status.'

Simon, Senior Manager, OU. (114:347)

'I think that's one way where this kind of partnership initiative can help. ... As far as I am concerned, nobody is more important than anybody else. But of course not everybody else perceives it that way and of course it's a Vice Chancellor that Chairs our Steering Group!'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (40:126)

According to the participants, the relationship which produced the most difficult problems to manage was that between the HEIs and FECs where issues of control, inequity and communication were most acute. Several participants talked about ensuring that FE colleagues had a voice at every level of the partnership. The fact that ultimately the HEI was responsible and accountable was at times problematical but participants described how this could be mitigated. For example, in New University there had been a review of the QA procedures for collaborative programmes and FECs had been represented in that process. The aim was to try to make the partnerships feel as inclusive as possible.

What the data also showed was that *Partnership involvement* needs to continue into the implementation phase. Several participants suggested that partners should be integrated into the processes of running, managing, reviewing and developing the programme. Commitment to managing the partnership, as well as developing the curriculum, was seen as essential to success even though it involved an additional input of time. Participants commented that this was ultimately time well spent. During the implementation phase most programmes had set up regular meetings of the partners to talk about, for example, assignment setting or handbook design. The HEIs were aware that they should keep the amount of unilateral dictat to a minimum, although there was a fine line between this and not being

decisive enough. The following quotation from Hilary described an example of positive practice:

'We had a day...where the Centre Managers and other people came here ... and we went through all the assignments ... What we can't do, of course, is change the validated units in terms of content and modify those but they are involved so it's not a question of things being sent out. ... it still feels to me like a negotiated position.'

Hilary, Lecturer, UC. (38:114)

While the intent was to involve partners at all stages, in practice this was sometimes difficult to achieve. However, the participants reported that where the partners knew that they would be welcome to be involved, they were content that the partnership was functioning well.

The data indicated that, more formally, involvement included the partners engaging with programme management. For foundation degrees this was expected and was explicitly laid down in the prospectus (HEFCE 2001) and the Benchmark (QAA 2004). Participants felt that full engagement through committees such as programme management and examination boards assisted in overcoming incomplete understanding and poor communication and helped develop *trust*. In the more complex partnerships, the task of managing these meetings proved to be quite a challenge due to the breadth of the constituency:

'Each programme has a programme board which consists of teaching staff, student representatives, employer representatives and, in the case of the Youth Work one, we're looking at a slightly wider sense of external representation than simply the direct employers and there are other people who are interested and in a sense have a stake in the programme who could usefully contribute to the ongoing development ... and will also be interested in the way the programme is being managed and developed so representatives of voluntary organisations, for example, may well be invited.'

Martin, Programme Director, OU. (54:178)

It would seem from the evidence that *partnership involvement* works at two levels. At the institutional level, the partners needed to be committed to working together. Several participants mentioned that it helped if there was a pre-existing relationship between the partners. In these cases, it was said that the partners had a better understanding of the priorities of the other members, and work progressed more smoothly. Nigel explained how it was much easier to develop modes of teaching and learning with one of the College's because of this pre-existing knowledge:

'I think in terms of teaching and learning there was very little difficulty and I was very happy to see that Partly that was due to the fact that we already had a collaborative provision with [College name] ... we had a shared understanding about what our requirements must be and what their approach might be.'

Nigel, Programme Director, NU. (80:244)

Other elements of *partnership involvement* were concerned with the practicalities of working collaboratively. Several participants mentioned the importance of relationships being two way and ensuring that the HEIs got involved with the work in the FECs and the workplace. In university college, for example, the HE lecturers undertook a proportion of the teaching (usually 25%) in the FECs which had the added benefit of strengthening the QA procedures. It also assisted in developing an HE culture within FE and ensured that the students' experience was enhanced. In the old university consortia, Ashley spoke about the importance of defining the roles and responsibilities of the different partners and ensuring that this was stated explicitly, and Max felt that a shared vision strengthened the partnership. In Tim's interview, the role of the HEI in supporting the employers through the processes of validation and delivery was seen as an important way that helped people work together and develop *trust*.

'I think we felt very well supported. We had excellent attention from colleagues in [old university] and we had very easy access to colleagues there. We didn't have any difficulty calling meetings or

gaining information or advice or guidance, so I think we were very well supported from the outset.'

Tim, Employer, OU. (24:68)

We will come back to the issue of *trust* later but, in conclusion, in considering what strengthens *partnership involvement*, a number of the participants talked about the importance of developing open and honest *communication*.

A quotation from Matt exemplifies this:

'In terms of partnership groups, the Certificate ... is a great example. ... it's a really successful partnership because of the people involved. It's ... open and honest and transparent, there's a lot of trust and support on that level ... It's a great programme, it always recruits its numbers, there's always extra demand.'

Matt, Outreach, NU. (50:156)

8.3.2 Senior Management Involvement

In addition to *partnership involvement*, Figure 8.1 shows that participants picked out a number of solutions related to the management and leadership of the programmes and collaborations. As Chapter 7 described, collaborative partnerships are complex and need *strong management* (ranked 2) coupled with *senior management involvement* (3) to demonstrate the institutional commitment to the project. They also require firm *leadership* (12=) to progress them and sustain them through the difficult times.

Senior management involvement was mentioned by all partners as being essential to the success of a collaborative partnership and ranked in the top five for all (Figure 8.4). It was explained that this commitment meant that those working on the project felt they were doing something of value. In particular, it was seen as a way to push the partnership strategy forward when the benefits of engaging in such difficult work were being questioned. Henry described the importance of senior management support and that, knowing that they wanted a partnership between the university and an FEC,

he had made an effort to make it happen, even though the benefits to his School were marginal:

'I'm aware there's support. 'We want to have a relationship with [FE College] can you make it work?' Yes I'll go and make it work and unless it causes major problems, I'm very happy to go ahead and do that, so I feel that support, pressure to collaborate. And it's necessary because, as I say, if we are looking at it coldly, you'd say what's in it for us?'

Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (88:286)

Although ideas originated from a range of sources, proactive championing by a senior manager was often the catalyst to a partnership being pursued and Jane described how essential this championing was:

'The senior management were very supportive at [Faculty name], my line manager was extremely supportive. She was really passionate about widening participation and about what could be done. And it was her passion and the respect that she had from the academic colleagues that got it off the ground. I could have been doing it for months ... and nobody would have taken any notice of me at all [laughter].'

Jane, Outreach, OU. (50:146)

In times of difficulty, having *senior management involvement* can make a big difference as they have resources, which can often unblock the barrier. For example, in old university there was a major problem over the financial model for providing student support. Senior managers from the university and the FECs met and were able to come to an agreement to move things forward, as the following manager describes:

'I think it was also necessary at a more senior level for people to step in, and, push those who were engaged in the management of the development to perhaps be a bit more flexible and certainly there were engagements with Principals ... to try to resolve some of the tensions which were handicapping things at operational levels.'

Neil, Senior Manager, OU. (46:134)

In addition to unblocking barriers, participants indicated that senior managers could deal with business issues such as competition. Partnership on course provision raises the tricky issue of competition between institutions. New University managed this through high level meetings involving senior staff from all partner organisations at which they agreed terms of engagement and arrived at a strategy reflecting the aspirations of the different players. They were working towards an explicit regional strategy of HEIs with associated colleges which would provide flexible learning opportunities across the region. Achieving this ideal would be dependent, in part, on the geography and the aspirations of the partners. In this example, there was relatively little real competition between the four HEIs in the region who provided for very different market sectors. Other regions may, in contrast, have much more competitive relationships.

Where competitive situations existed, collaborative agreements were only reached by senior managers dealing with each other to decide who works with who, and on what (or else they would have to embark on an aggressive winner takes all solution). Fiona described the reality of institutions working this through:

'The politics is probably ... going to be sorted out ...at Steering Group level which the VCs are on and they're going to have to do a deal... on the basis...[that]... if we've got several programmes developing, presumably they'll say you can have one if I can have one, or if we've only got one programme, they'll do a deal on something else that they're working to collaboratively.'
Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (24:76)

In each consortium, participants talked about the importance of being able to get senior managers together. In the case of old university this was done as issues arose but in the case of the other two HEIs, this was done through a Steering Group set up for this purpose as Colin explains:

'It's an HE forum with each partner and ... with senior management... these are bodies to bring up issues of strategic or operational import that are bilateral and they are a good focus for getting new provision going as well and they are designed to make sure that those with managerial responsibility, who can make resources available and so on, are then informed.'

Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (106:536)

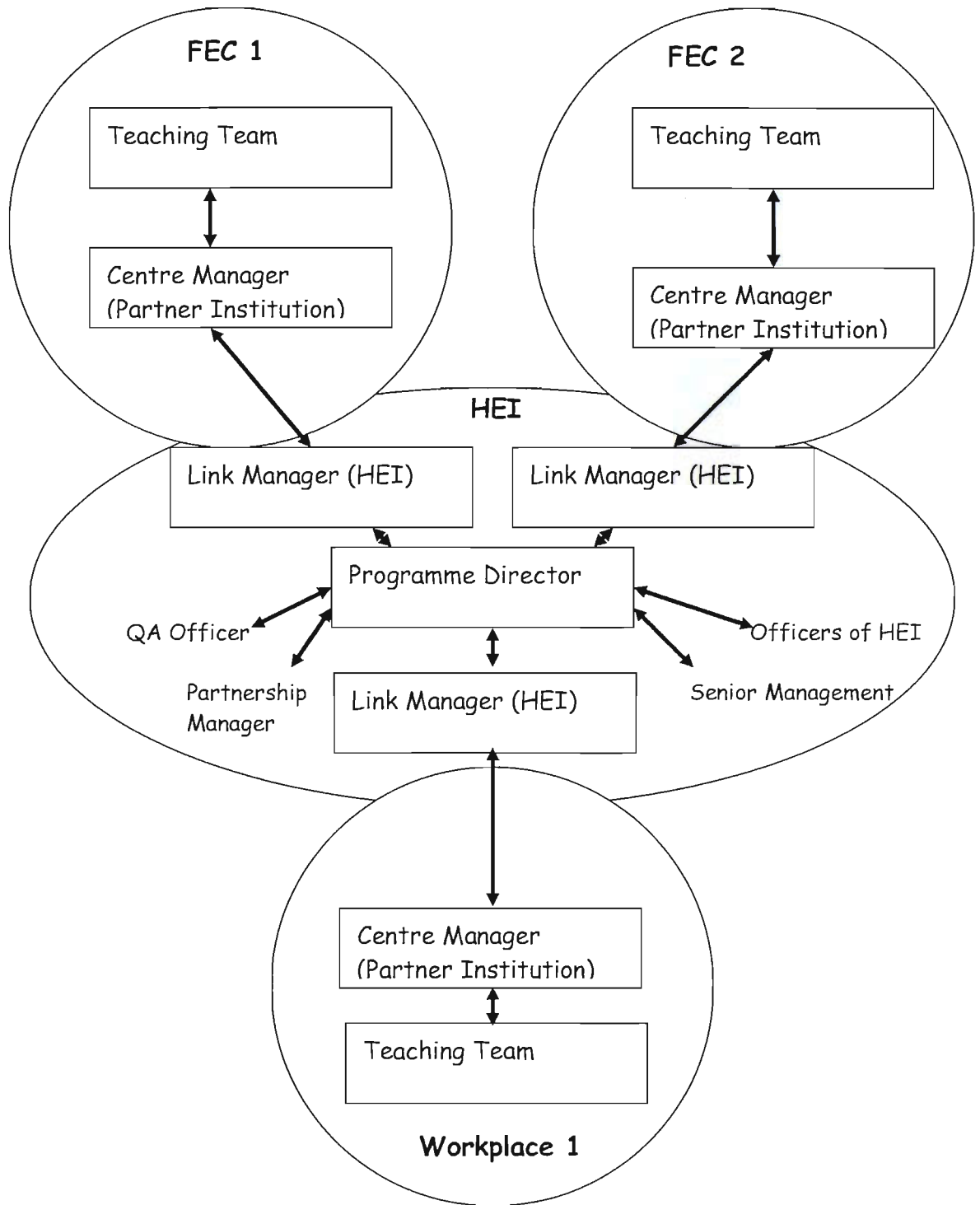
One of the interesting aspects shown in Figure 8.5 is that senior managers perceived their role as being of much greater significance than is perceived by other staff. This may be just an over-emphasis by the managers of their own importance or it may reflect the lack of understanding of the management role by those with teaching roles.

8.3.3 Strong Management and Effective Leadership

What was also clear from the data was that once the partnership was underway, *strong management and leadership* was required to ensure that it stayed on track; aspects valued particularly highly by the teachers interviewed (Figure 8.5). In Chapter 7, it was shown that many of the barriers to effective partnership were exacerbated by poor or ineffective management of participants' skills, resources and QA processes. The data suggested that the systems required are complex and involve multiple levels of management. Figure 8.6 shows in diagram form a typical arrangement for management of collaborative partnerships devised from evidence from the interviews and programme documentation. In all the programmes investigated, the model of management had the same constituent parts although the precise names of the roles varied. The commonality of this form of management structure suggests that this could provide a useful model for HEIs wishing to embark on collaborative curriculum development.

In general terms, within the HEI, a role existed to manage the partnership with the other constituencies (**partnership manager**). This person was

Figure 8.6 Management roles within the partnerships



instrumental in managing the accreditation process and setting up the instruments which formally govern the partnership. The QA processes were usually handled by a **quality officer** who worked closely with the **programme director** in the HEI. There were other officers of the HEI involved in the partnership who had specialised roles such as the HR managers or the finance officers who assisted the programme directors in managing elements of the collaboration. These management roles were present in all six programmes and existed in addition to the *senior management involvement* already described. At programme level, each example had an additional layer which does not exist in non-collaborative programmes. The programme director in the HEI (shown in yellow) had responsibility for delivery at a number of sites (FECs shown in blue and workplaces shown in brown) and had to manage the relationships between each of the partners. In order to do this effectively, separate management roles existed in the HEI and in the partners. The programme director, located in the HEI, was the key manager who had ultimate responsibility for the delivery, the curriculum and the QA. S/he worked with all the other managers to make the processes work and to ensure the students experience. They delegated some of the aspects of the operational management task to others but the programme was their responsibility and they were accountable. To cope with the multiple locations, two further roles existed. The **link manager** worked to the programme director and was also located in the HEI. Their prime responsibility was to work with one or more of the partners to ensure the delivery and to liaise between the partner and the HEI. In the small programmes, the programme director and the link manager roles were undertaken by the same person. They were partnered by a **centre manager** who was located in the FEC or workplace and who coordinated the work of the centre's teaching team on a day-to-day basis.

This generalised model of management for collaborative programmes was suggested from the experience of the participants. In practice it meant that

the programme director could be far removed from the point of delivery and hence the quality of *leadership* that they exhibited determined the success of the partnership. Several participants talked about the importance of having the right person in this role. For example, in the following quotation, Travis described the *strong management and leadership* exhibited by Jack:

'I mean ...a crucial influence on [the success of the partnership] is the programme director ... and fortunately...Jack... is absolutely superb. Also Jack's secretary is terribly well organised. ... Now if some-one else is doing it who is less well organised ... than Jack, then it could be a completely different story so I think that it's very much person-dependent.'

Travis, FE Course Leader, UC. (118:351)

Success then depended on sound programme and partnership management systems. For example, programme management boards were described as integral to the overall management of the academic programme and played an essential role in partnership monitoring. Several participants explained that these needed explicit terms of reference and clarity about the purpose of the meetings. They also provided a useful documentary record of the partnership evolution and the development and implementation of the programme as Max explained:

'Prior to the programme board ...we have lots of discussions about what needs to go through It brings a clarity, has given us a chance to look back at what's just happened and what's about to happen and ... there are detailed minutes with recommendations which I go to. ...when it comes to a new set of students coming in....'

Max, Employer Lecturer, OU. (97:286)

Many participants said that the management documents acted as an essential reference. Formal contracts were documented through the *Memoranda of Agreement* which were signed on behalf of all partners and recorded the agreement on finance, intellectual property and termination (seen as important by all constituents Figure 8.2). In each case this was

supplemented with a partnership handbook explaining the detailed operational guidelines and the responsibilities of those involved. At the programme level, a handbook describing the systems and processes was published and, in most cases, each unit also had a handbook documenting the content, mode of delivery and assessment. Most participants stressed the importance of having good documentary support to help staff deliver a high quality programme and to ensure students were treated equitably.

As well as managing the partnership, *strong management* of the learning is vital. All partnerships had instituted a virtual learning environment (or VLE) through the Internet using BlackBoard. Partners saw this as a way to manage the students' learning and provide a common platform for administration. It also had the added advantage of providing a degree of equity between the partners which reduced the danger of students receiving a varied learning offer. Several participants remarked that the introduction of the VLE had helped improve the *communication* within the partnership:

'We have BlackBoard VLE, Virtual Learning Environment, and one of the ways that we try to ensure that there's equivalence of experience is that everything that we can is put up on that...[it]... means that everybody no matter where they are taking the programme has access to all the programme documentation, all the teaching materials...' Jack, Programme Director, UC (50:154).

8.3.4 Good Communication

As the evidence on barriers suggested in the previous chapter, poor *communication* was not seen as an acute barrier in these partnerships. However, *good communication* was mentioned by almost all participants as an important way of overcoming barriers (especially FE participants – Figure 8.4). Excellent communication skills were seen as an essential requirement in the programme director who was expected to combine firm leadership and management with a facilitative and team building approach. Managing the

relationships between partners was described as very hard work requiring a high degree of political awareness, as Jack explained:

'At the end of the day, people sometimes say to me how do you do it and what are the skills ... you need, and in a flippant way I say well you need to be a politician. The skills of being able to work out why somebody is arguing and shouting, and being able to manage that situation, a lot of them are communication skills and it's hard work.'
Jack, Programme Director, UC. (110:358)

The mechanisms to ease communication between the partners included complex and numerous committees and working groups to ensure that all the partners were involved. Each of the consortia had supplemented the formal structure required by the HEI by additional *ad hoc* committees to cover different elements of the partnership. For example in old university, curriculum implementation teams met regularly to plan the programmes of study for each of the units and to develop the assignments. These teams also met to moderate marking and to share resources. In university college, the Head of Academic Partnerships had set up a committee of support staff which focused on the demands that partnership working made on administrative systems:

'We've just set up another committee... which brings together all the support staff - registry, admissions - together to talk about collaborative provision. Issues like Library, IT and so on and the Assistant Principal has kindly agreed to Chair that ... it's given it much more clout and it's focused minds well on it.'
Colin, Senior Manager, UC. (106:334)

In addition, all the teams stressed the importance of mechanisms for speedy communication. Electronic mail and voicemail facilities were used extensively and participants stressed the importance of there being a culture of providing a timely response, as the following quotation illustrates:

'I would say [communication] is excellent because I do literally pick up the phone or email him every day and, straight away, well within about two hours, I'll have the answer and it might be that he was tutoring or lecturing then so obviously it could not be straight away.'
Pat, FE Course Leader, NU. (94:280)

Communication was seen as an essential part of the process of building up *trust and mutual understanding*. This was mentioned in a third of the interviews, particularly where there had been little previous contact between the partners. The data (Figure 8.4) indicated that *trust* was seen as particularly significant by the FECs, for whom it was the second ranked factor after *communication*. This may reflect the rather hierarchical nature of the relationship with HE, as well as the fact that FECs were just emerging from a particularly competitive phase of their development.

8.3.5 Developing Trust and Mutual Understanding

It was evident from the data that trust improved as people got to know each other and began to see other viewpoints. The building up of understanding from different perspectives was reported as important because it helped the partners interpret behaviour more accurately. The process of building trust is a lengthy and fragile process (Bottery 2003) and participants explained that it required effort on the part of all partners. The following two quotations are both from the old university consortia and demonstrate how it looked from both sides of the partnership. In the first quotation Michael explains that patience was needed as FECs worked at building relationships with HEIs and in the second quotation, Neil explains the view of the HEI.

'I would hope that in areas like partnership work with higher education institutions, that we're nearly there... That all the work that has gone on... can pay dividends in terms of building that trust element, which in some ways is more important than the infrastructure ... I make it clear where I stand and resist the people who have become more frustrated ... We're not there yet, but we've gone in and we've got a good chance.'

Michael, FE Senior Manager, OU, (28:98)

'I think that some of those problems [of communication] are overcome with time and engagement, in that as you work with people you begin to develop a much better, well I suppose it's trust really, it's a feeling that you can work together. You begin to see the issues from the other person's point of view.'

Neil, Senior Manager, OU. (46:134)

These views were echoed by other participants. Ernest talked about the importance of *mutual understanding* developing over time so that partners had enough knowledge of each other to really understand what was being said. *Communication* and *mutual understanding* were essential as the partnerships developed systems for implementing the programmes.

8.3.6 Ensuring Quality

Ensuring the quality of staff was one of the concerns expressed in the previous chapter on barriers. All the programmes reported that they operated a tutor approval scheme where the curriculum vitae of FE and employer staff involved in the delivery or assessment of the programme were considered. In some cases, there was a formal process which also involved interview and appointment of the staff to a panel of approved tutors (old university) and in others, FE staff were approved with or without examiner status according to their experience (university college). An expectation that all staff would take part in development activities was an integral part of the acceptance of individuals as tutors and each HEI provided such activities.

'I finally got agreement this year that the staff development activities that are available to [university college] staff should also be made available to the approved staff... once they have been approved, so they have been through that short course, they then become an associate tutor...and that puts them on the list to have access to all the staff development activities that I would have access to.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (76:242)

All the processes operated by the HEIs as part of the normal QA of non-collaborative programmes were also applied in the partnership context according to the participants. Peer review of teaching occurred within the partnership and there was recognition that ideally this should be across centres, although in reality this only occurred regularly in one consortium. Moderation of work was reportedly done on a more regular basis and each programme operated a review of work across different sites to help ensure equity.

The complexity of these procedures, particularly for staff not working in the HEI, was recognised by the participants and each consortium had a handbook which spelt them out. This was seen to be essential for those non-HEI partners who were often also operating different procedures for their own institution. A number of the participants agreed that it was good practice to involve the QA officers in the partnership development to ensure it was embedded from the start:

'Another really important source of support [is] our Academic Policy and Quality Unit. ... they will be a member of the ...programme development team and ... will help with procedural issues...They're very experienced in terms of what goes wrong and what needs to be addressed - not just with the procedure but with advice.'

Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (62: 198)

A key part of QA is to ensure equity in the student experience. The nature of the student body in this case study was one of greater diversity (partly because of their aim of widening access). In all the programmes, with the exception of the HND in Business, the students were predominantly mature and in work and many of them had returned to study. Several participants remarked on the benefit of students studying at least part of their course in FECs which were seen as more focused on students' learning needs than

HEIs. Excellent student support mechanisms addressing diversity were reported as an essential part of the implementation strategy:

'The great strength of the FE are their pastoral care and their hands-on experience because that's the way they deliver and that works very well.'

Carla, Programme Director, UC. (56:163)

Several of the participants said that the student demand for study support could be very great particularly in the early weeks as they adjusted to HE study. A challenge for the partnership, it was explained, was to ensure that there was appropriate articulation of the student support services in FE and HE and that the students could access them easily. Patsy explained:

'The students needed a lot of support because many of them had not written assignments at HE level ..., they need a lot of preparation and study skills support, essay writing - a whole range of different types of support ...We realised we had to ensure that all those things were in place because you really don't want to set them up to fail'

Patsy, Outreach, OU. (66:194)

8.3.7 Developing Flexibility

Many of the students were also in work and the services and support had to be provided to suit their needs. The HEIs (and even the FECs) in this research were predominantly set up to cater for full time, day time delivery during a restricted number of weeks (Monday to Friday) in the year. This was particularly true of the administrative services. Participants explained that to be successful at collaborative provision, the institutions needed to change how and when they provided the services to students. Most establishments had libraries which opened outside of the normal day, but collaborative provision required other services to consider how they could increase their flexibility. Several participants mentioned aspects of increasing the *flexibility*

of student support and learning opportunities but Fiona was one of the most adamant that educational institutions needed to reassess the whole area of student support in the light of partnership work and part time delivery:

'You develop your support and your delivery mechanisms for all your students in a way that allows as much flexibility as you can ... but as I say if you're thinking that if you want to apply for financial support and you have to attend the office between 9 and 5, Monday to Friday, well let's just get rid of that for everybody and have some kind of on-line applications procedure which anybody can tap into. ... I would have thought you would need to be looking fundamentally at how you resource infrastructure as well as the curriculum delivery.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (72:238)

The participants were advocating for *flexibility* to be built in from the start to enable students to access the programmes and the support services. Students, it was said, needed to know as much about their programme in advance as possible so that, within reason, they could work at their own pace and fit their studying into the demands of their working and family lives. Unit handbooks, on-line learning and the use of VLEs were seen to help, and it was seen as good practice for **all** students, not just WP students or those in work. The majority of the participants mentioned this and the following quotation captured the spirit of this view:

'So it's about having subject matter and content that's fit for purpose but also about having a delivery which fits in with the lifestyle that the people now need which is probably not going to be three years, full time study away at a University. It's probably going to be anything else and a combination of anything else which is part time, locally-based delivery, possibly evenings, possibly weekends, possibly block sessions, booking a week of your holidays and going away and doing things. It might be distance learning. It might be electronic learning and combinations of those, plus the kind of infrastructure that you need to support those kind of complicated packages of learning which might mean that you need bridging courses and things or it might mean that you need sophisticated mentoring and stuff like that.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (12:32)

The above quotation demonstrates that the curriculum development must concentrate just as much on the mode of delivery, the support mechanisms and the learning environment as on the academic and skills content.

Many of the participants were reflective about the success of collaborative partnerships and were keen that the programmes were evaluated. The complexity caused difficulties and so it was seen as important for the teams to continuously *evaluate their success* to ensure quality enhancement and to provide an evidence base for future collaborative work.

8.3.8 Commitment to Aims

In Chapter 6, the aims of each of the programmes were analysed in detail, but when examining how barriers were overcome by the teams, a common response was that the partnerships needed to have *clarity of purpose* and a *commitment to the aims* of the curriculum development. As these programmes were all responding to a need in the workplace, assisting the employers to be clear about what they wanted was seen as an important first step. Several of the education participants explained how it wasn't always easy to clarify what the employers wanted. This was less true of those employers involved in the foundation degrees who came, in the main, from an educational background and were used to identifying clear learning outcomes, but for other employers this was a challenge. Fiona explained:

'I think they actually need quite a lot of coaching in terms of finding out what is it that they want their employees to be able to do, not now but in five years time and I think they need a lot of help in thinking through what that might be ...It's likely to be certain aptitudes and skills and things which are likely to be adaptable and it's likely to be in certain fields.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (32:100)

Several of those who were involved with the foundation degrees also talked about the importance of there being a focused outcome to the programmes. In this small study, the feeling was that where the outcome was to train people for a clear and identified role (e.g. youth worker or classroom assistant) the programme was much easier to develop than for a broader generic role (such as health worker). In all programmes, however, participants stressed developing a dialogue with employers to sharpen up the intended outcomes. This process took time to do properly and was seen as quite frustrating by the employers who were not used to working to annual cycles of academic planning and wanted a more immediate solution.

Once the purpose had been identified then the evidence suggested that it was important that all the partners were committed to the aims. The importance of sharing motives was seen by the participants as essential and there needed to be a feeling that everyone was moving in the same direction towards the same ultimate outcome. According to some participants this became particularly critical in seeing the development through challenging times. In the following quotation Matt stressed the importance of commitment to ensuring a favourable outcome:

'Because at the end of the day if a School's not committed to a programme, then it's not going to succeed. We've learnt that with various collaborations that we've been involved in.'
Matt, Outreach, NU. (30:88)

8.3.9 Institutional Commitment and Resources

Many of the participants talked about the importance of there being clear benefits to increase motivation. According to the evidence, particularly from the senior managers, the best situation was where there was a clear *win-win* outcome for all partners and where this was backed up by *institutional commitment*. The people engaged in the development work needed to feel

that is was worthwhile. Richard explained how, for him, this compensated for the work involved.

'I mean one's occasionally aware... that other Colleges have got gripes about it ... but it's always seemed to me that the pluses completely outweigh the minuses, they must do - it's just that one of the programmes has been a much more enjoyable experience in itself than the other really. But nevertheless the end pluses outweigh the minuses in that case too.'

Richard, FE Senior Manager, OU. (67:210)

The programme team members needed this commitment to ensure that they were provided with the resources to undertake the work. As we have already seen, lack of resources was a key barrier. In the more successful partnerships decisions were taken about *getting the right team* with the necessary *experience* and skills, and *budgeting time* to allow the teams to meet and undertake their work. Each of these factors was mentioned by the participants as ways that the barriers were overcome. Carol's input is typical:

'I've been very supported by the institution in terms in developing it [the programme], ... and given staff to teach on it, ...I have a dedicated team and I have been given time initially to run with it as an idea and to develop it and ... the institution has been very supportive of that.'

Carol, Programme Director, UC. (104:330)

One of the resource issues which participants mentioned was *getting the right team* of staff both in terms of identifying staff with the right skills and attitude to undertake collaborative work and in terms of senior management freeing them up to work on the curriculum. As with most areas of work, the people who could best contribute to this task were also in high demand for other work. Partnerships are about people working together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Getting a team together that worked

well and which had a degree of permanence was an important step. Henry explained this from his perspective:

'I think of those [ways of overcoming the barriers] the biggest one is to do with the people...their competence within their sphere, as perceived by the other party, and then the relationship between them. Our best collaborations are characterised by warm personal relationships ...and ... confidence and ... trust. So that they are nice people but they are nice and competent people in their sphere.'
Henry, Senior Manager, NU. (72:232)

Finding the right people to work on collaborative curriculum development was reportedly a problem; people skilled in partnership work were in short supply and sought after by other teams. Where they could be found, an additional problem was that they were often busy doing other things. Several participants said that one of the essential elements of partnership work was ensuring that the people working on the curriculum were given sufficient time. This is a workload management problem for senior managers, made more difficult as the funding for new programmes only comes when students are recruited. Many participants working in the teams argued that they needed to be granted more time to do the work, rather than 'gifting their free time' to the project, and that the more successful partnerships were the ones where members had a time allocation to work on the curriculum. Martin explained how this did happen eventually in old university but only after a period when the team had to absorb the work into their existing tasks:

'The original plan was to appoint somebody to be the project manager for the, the foundation degrees. That did eventually happen but it happened far too far down the line for the first of the programmes that we developed so that one, in practical terms, was very difficult simply because of the time that was needed and the time wasn't there because people weren't being released from other work.'
Martin, Programme Director, OU. (38:122)

Finding the resources in advance was clearly an important way of overcoming the barriers associated with collaborative working. However, one of the elements which was only mentioned by senior managers, was the issue of ensuring the programmes were ones which were viable and sustainable. *Viability* allows the institutions to recoup any investment. This is important in a process which can take up to two years of work before there is a product which is earning income. In each of the institutions there were examples of programmes that had been developed, or had been started, that either didn't get validated or didn't ever recruit, and this represented a considerable drain on the institutional resources, as Lesley described:

'it's just very frustrating that we haven't had lift off of foundation degrees... We had a prototype in hospitality and tourism which never flew ...and we've been up the aisle with [name] College and ... they went with someone else. We were part of the [name of programme with College] and that's working its way through but that's such small numbers that it amounts to a handful of beans.'

Lesley, Senior Manager, NU. (40:132)

The other related aspect is sustainability. This was raised in a number of the interviews, again more often by senior managers. There may be an identified need for a programme but it needs to be one which provides a continuous supply of students. Again there were reports of programmes where the recruitment in year one was excellent but where it was difficult for the institution to get cohorts in years two and three. The managers felt that to be worth the up-front investment, the institutions needed to be sure that the programme would have sustainable recruitment over the medium term.

8.3.10 Staff Development

All the participants agreed that *staff development* was important for the success of a collaborative programme. This was needed for everyone but

providing development opportunities for FE and employer partners by HE was emphasised. None of the participants questioned the flow of development being **from** HE: the only suggestion that there would also be a need for development **of** the HE partners was made by Fiona based on her perception of a lack of capacity:

'I think there is a crying need... for what I call professional and staff development in the field of partnership working and widening participation. ... Loads more money in the next two or three years, but where these people are going to come from and who is going to do all this work I do not know. They're certainly not going to be experienced.'

Fiona, Senior Manager, NU. (58:186)

Staff development programmes were reportedly in existence in all the partnerships providing curriculum development skills, knowledge of HE processes, teaching and assessment skills and CPD opportunities. In each institution this had been embedded into a scheme for the development of FE and employer part-time teachers named variously an associate tutors', associate partners' and part time tutors' scheme. Although each HEI ran a programme for new HE lecturers, none of them required this to be followed by these tutors. However, there was agreement that over time the process of embedding collaborative staff into normal development processes would become more formal. Jack explained how this was happening in university college:

'I finally got agreement this year that the staff development activities that are available to [university college] staff should also be made available to the approved staff. ... once they have been approved, so they have been through that short course, they then have access ... to all the staff development activities that I would have access to.'

Jack, Programme Director, UC. (76:242)

The FE and the employer participants saw access to staff development and CPD as one of the benefits of working collaboratively and spoke enthusiastically about there being more opportunities to work closely with HEI colleagues. However, they also mentioned that attendance was difficult because of heavy workloads. FE staff felt that they were being asked to give their time for free and were unwilling to do so on top of heavy workloads.

Travis exemplified this:

'Last year an initiative began where tutors could attend six sessions over the year on Saturdays where they would get some input on the structure of HE, the nature of HE, teaching and so on. Some of my tutors have done that, some of them are very resistant to going on Saturdays. After a hectic week it's the last thing they want to do.'
Travis, FE Course Leader, UC. (76:224)

According to the participants there was also no money for paying for staff development. The issue was whether the HEI retained more of the funding to pay for the staff development or whether more of the funding was disbursed to the FECs and then reclaimed by the HE through charging for it. Staff development was seen as an important way that collaboration could be supported but, as with many aspects of partnership, it was more complex to organise than on a traditional undergraduate programme.

8.4 Conclusion

The participants in this case study have all been involved in collaborative curriculum development and, in this chapter, their experience in over-coming the problems of partnerships has been analysed. In most cases, they have learned by trial and error and have expended significant energy in finding a way through the problems of working collaboratively. The solutions proposed here have come from practice and reflect how participants in the six programmes have learnt to work together and have been successful in

developing new undergraduate curriculum. By learning lessons from this experience, more effective partnerships may be forged to develop relevant and responsive programmes. This will be developed in Chapter 9.

9.1 Introduction

This collective case study has investigated the nature of collaborative partnerships formed to develop and deliver six undergraduate programmes. All the programmes studied here have involved consortia of HE, FE and employer institutions. Each programme was also developed with either widening participation and/or workforce development aims. Working in partnership, widening participation and workforce development have all been elements of government policy since Prime Minister Blair came into power in 1997 (Wildridge *et al*, 2004; DfEE, 2000b; DfEE, 1998) and remain central elements of Labour Party policy. As Ruth Kelly wrote in her letter to HEFCE in January 2006 fairer access to HE and as the following quote indicates, further involvement of employers in developing programmes with HEIs:

' There are two major priorities that I am asking the Council to pursue, not just in the funding allocations it decides in the short-run, but in developing strategy for the longer term. The first is to lead radical change in the provision of higher education in this country by incentivising and funding provision which is wholly designed, funded or provided by employers. A strategy of growth through employer-led provision will ensure that the HE sector is fulfilling that vital part of its mission that delivers the skills that the labour market needs.'
(Kelly, R., 2006, DfES)

The evidence from this research has shown that working collaboratively is a complex process and each partner has a particular motivation for being involved. The perceived benefits and disadvantages of collaboration differ between the individuals and partner organisations. However, this case study has shown there is a degree of commonality in how people view partnership for curriculum development.

In Chapter 1, the principal research questions were stated and these will be revisited here in the light of the evidence to offer conclusions. The first question asked why HEIs, FECs and employers involve themselves in collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level. The outcomes from the study of the aims of the programmes the partners shared and the benefits they perceived will be reviewed here. In presenting the data, two models of aims and benefits were developed to help explain the outcomes from the research and this chapter will look at the implications this has for practice.

The second research question related to the problems experienced by the teams as they formed the partnerships and began to develop the programmes. It asked how the barriers to collaborative partnership affected the processes involved in curriculum development in HE. In Chapter 7 the evidence from the interviews and questionnaires was analysed to identify the critical barriers to progress both in terms of partnership and in developing the curriculum. Later in this chapter, this evidence has been used to develop a typology of barriers which is then used to explain how a better understanding of these barriers might help future partnerships make more rapid progress.

The third research question asked how the experience of working to overcome these barriers allowed the teams to develop solutions; in particular, how the process of collaborative curriculum development could be facilitated to encourage the government's policy objectives of WP and workforce development. A model is presented here that embeds this experience to explain the nature of the process of collaboration for curriculum development that might provide valuable lessons for other partnerships.

The experience of the participants has provided evidence of the types of barriers that hinder collaborative curriculum development and how the consortia coped with and overcame these barriers. The interviews showed that participants had become involved in developing programmes

without understanding in advance the nature of partnership work and the challenges that it might bring. The participants reported that they had to work through the processes, often looking for solutions by trial and error. In this chapter, this experience is brought together in a framework that identifies the stages involved in overcoming the barriers and making progress towards effective partnership.

It is the role of this concluding chapter to draw the thesis together. The conceptual frameworks that have emerged from the data are used to identify how the process of collaborative partnership for curriculum development might be improved and made more effective. Each of the sections 9.2-9.4 conclude with a section highlighting the main findings of the research. In section 9.5 a unifying model is offered as a synthesis of this research and a framework for practice. It draws on the evidence from each of the analysis chapters 6-8 and the further discussion in this chapter. In section 9.6 some implications for policy are discussed both at the national level for government and at institutional level with the hope that the process of collaborative curriculum development can be understood better. Finally, section 9.7 considers future research questions which would enable this work to be taken forward.

9.2 Aims and Benefits of Collaborative Partnerships

RQ 1: Why do HEIs, FECs and employers involve themselves in collaborative curriculum development at undergraduate level?

9.2.1 The Aims of the Collaborative Partnerships

Working collaboratively to develop curriculum is a complex undertaking as evidenced in this research through the participants' experience. In order to take part in the first place, or to persist as barriers appeared, people needed to believe that the benefits would eventually outweigh the problems. The work of Tett *et al* (2003) into partnerships in community education identified the importance of *mutual benefit* as an essential

element of collaboration usually identified overtly in the established aims. This research has taken this further and the partners' aims in this case study have been shown to fall into three categories. The strategic aims (Figure 6.4) agreed by all participants and **stated** explicitly were important in gaining the initial commitment. These related to worthy purposes which had high moral status and which the participants were willing to share with each other and make public. They have been shown to relate to the mission of the institutions and to higher level needs such as government policy and political drivers. In this research, the strategic aims expressed the desire to increase the opportunities for professional training, to provide progression in employment or HE, and to develop and modernise the workforce.

In the case of the educational institutions, it was important to demonstrate compliance with government policy especially in terms of WP, although this particular aim was found embedded in the programme rationale rather than the stated aims. All participants knew that this was an explicit aim of the programmes. Its absence from the list could be due to the fact that it was an assumed aim particularly in the foundation degrees where widening access was an essential feature of the award. WP and social inclusion were seen by employers as aims of the educational establishments but ones that they were happy to endorse. This research shows that despite this, by making social inclusion an explicit aim, the attitudes and practices of the employers were affected and several of the employer participants explained how this had changed their practice towards recruitment, diversity and equal opportunities. Perhaps the most surprising example of this occurred with the charity employers who were persuaded to include a wider consideration of the social impacts of a range of disabilities in the programme than had previously been the case.

In addition to these stated aims, the research identified others which came to light as the trust between the partners grew and people became more open. These **emergent** aims were found to relate more to the development needs of the partners. They included the need to raise the

status of the workforce, widen the curriculum offer and provide staff development opportunities. In several programmes the collaboration provided a vehicle for changing attitudes and practices by transferring learning through organisations working alongside each other, and the majority of the participants talked about this in the interviews.

Thirdly, the interviews revealed that all the participants were aware of aims that either they or their organisations had for taking part in this work which were never revealed to the other participants. These **un-stated** aims were seen to be more sensitive and of a commercial nature. They included aspects such as meeting difficult targets, financial gain and enhancing the reputation of the organisation. Overall these were seen as business aims relating to the continued viability of the organisation in an increasingly competitive market.

The definition of the aims for the curriculum and the partnership was seen by the participants to be essential for a successful outcome. In considering the outcomes of this element of the research, some implications for future partnership teams can be identified. These are offered by way of conclusion:

Findings from this Research

- **Clear articulation of the strategic aims enhanced the partners' commitment to the curriculum development.**
- **Stated strategic aims had a high moral status, tended to relate to organisational mission, and partners were willing to subscribe to them publicly.**
- **Participants in partnerships had important aims which they either kept to themselves or allowed to emerge as trust developed.**
- **Emergent aims related to developmental aspirations.**
- **Un-stated aims were perceived as more sensitive, related to the business of the organisations and were perceived to have a much lower moral value.**

- **Leaders of collaborative curriculum development teams should be aware of the existence of emergent and un-stated aims.**

9.2.2 Perception of Benefits

In addition to the aims of the partnerships, the strength of purpose also reflected the perceived benefits of being involved in collaborative curriculum development. As we saw in Chapter 3, other studies of partnerships have identified benefits which have accrued to work in other contexts (e.g. social inclusion (Clegg and McNulty, 2002); community education (Tett *et al*, 2003); franchised programmes (Gun, 1995)). There is some similarity between this study and the perceived benefits of partnership in different contexts found in these other studies. However, in this research, the specific benefits of partnership work for curriculum development has been explored and conceptualised into a model.

The threefold division of aims into those reflecting the **mission** of the organisation, providing an impetus to organisational or individual **development**, and promoting the sustainability of the **business** of the organisation was further strengthened by an analysis of the perceived benefits. The model that was used (Figure 6.5) also demonstrated that the benefits could manifest themselves intrinsically (from within the organisation) or extrinsically (outside the organisation). The model as applied to the programmes is described in detail in Chapter 6 but there are some general conclusions to be added here.

The HEI participants reported that the key benefits for them were the intrinsic developmental benefits, the extrinsic mission benefits and the intrinsic business benefits. Working in collaborative partnerships, according to the participants, had provided development opportunities by observing how colleagues in FECs and businesses tackled problems. They reported that it helped tackle the criticism of HE being elitist and

provided opportunities for students to take part in well-supported work-based learning. The skills required to work in partnership were seen as valuable in their own personal development. Many of the participants reported that collaboration had promoted pedagogical development by partners sharing examples of good practice, and the personal satisfaction that came from being involved was high on people's perceived benefits. However, this has to be set against the stressful nature of the work and the reported difficulties of working in this way rather than in more traditional and insular ways.

HEI participants were united in seeing this type of work as helping them achieve their WP targets and providing a more socially inclusive service. Partnership, particularly with FECs, was seen as providing a way of reaching groups of students that the HEIs have traditionally found hard to recruit, and the nature of the curriculum that was developed as a result provided more flexible delivery much closer to the point of need. Collaborative curriculum development was regarded as a key part of a WP strategy which would help HEIs deliver government policy and avoid possible financial or recruitment penalties (which at the time of this study were seen as a real threat). Intrinsic business benefits were also rated highly by the HEI participants who saw the opportunity to widen the curriculum offer. Initially some participants also felt that there would be financial gain to the institutions but, by the time of being interviewed, all participants felt that there was a financial penalty as the cost of working in partnership was so high.

FE partners reported the intrinsic developmental benefits overall as being the most important ones for them. The opportunity to engage in HE programmes and to work alongside HE colleagues was seen by many as being a great advantage to the individual in terms of increasing their motivation and providing staff development opportunities. Participants saw working with responsive students on programmes that allowed them to go into more depth as being fulfilling and that the increased understanding that came from this work benefited all their courses. The

opportunity to take part in curriculum development and design from first principles was new to all the FE participants interviewed, and the work provided opportunities for staff to develop their skills.

Although the employers stressed the intrinsic business benefits more highly than either of the educational partners, the developmental benefits were again dominant. Employers perceived that staff recruitment and retention would be improved by these programmes and that there would consequently be some financial advantage through, for example, lower recruitment costs. The institutions that took part were largely based in southern England which is an expensive place for workers to live. Collaborative developments were seen by the employers as a way of 'growing their own' workforce from people who already lived in the local area. This factor in particular may be a localised phenomenon which does not transfer to other, less economically affluent parts of the country (except for particularly low-paid workers such as teaching assistants).

The developmental advantages reported by the employers were the workforce modernisation impacts of engaging in work with education partners. Employers were keen to provide excellent training for their staff and they felt that by engaging in partnership they were able to influence the nature of the programmes that were validated. The opportunity to take part in the delivery of the programmes through module inputs and work-based learning was also seen by the employers as a benefit and had the additional advantage of tackling conservatism in the workplace.

The perceived benefits by individuals for themselves and for their institutions were numerous and the impact was wide-reaching, although this does have to be set against the barriers and difficulties that the participants experienced along the way. Several participants, whilst acknowledging the benefits, questioned whether the effort (and the financial benefit) was worth it in their institutions and whether this type of initiative would be sustainable.

This research was designed to consider the collaborative curriculum development process and the involvement of different partners in that work. The students were not included as participants as their involvement in the development process was minimal. However, most of the participants mentioned benefits accruing to the students. These will be considered briefly but these results do not have the validity of the results from the other participants who spoke for themselves. The student voice in this case is one step removed, although because the cohorts on the programmes are small, the members of staff know the students very well.

In the foundation degrees, the perceived benefits to students were very similar: Working with Children (Figure 9.1a); Early Years (9.1c) and Child and Youth Studies (9.1e). In each case the perception was that the extrinsic mission benefits were dominant. These programmes were designed to meet the needs of WP students, in particular mature women returning to education. It was perceived that the programmes achieved this aim and fulfilled the need for more socially inclusive programmes: providing more opportunities for students (intrinsic mission benefit) and qualifications and career enhancement for a particular student group (extrinsic development benefit). The business benefits perceived for students related to their increased access to the resources of the HEIs for their work as classroom assistants. The following quotation from Jane sums up these benefits:

'All the students that I've spoken to about it say it's a fabulous course and they love it. So the students who are on it have no worry about it at all.... It's really very good for me to know that something that I was involved with right at the start is a successful course.'

Jane, Outreach, OU. (70: 208)

The Canine Assistance Studies programme showed a different pattern of perceived benefits for the students (Figure 9.1b). Here the development drivers were paramount. However, the perceived development benefits were not only intrinsic in terms of the ability to do the GDMI job but also extrinsic in giving them an externally recognised qualification.

'There was ... a generally held view that there would be great value in students attaining an externally validated qualification because it would actually shake things up in those areas...it would mean that students themselves would... actually attain a qualification that was transferable.'

Max, Lecturer, Employer. (35: 98)

The Business programme (Figure 9.1d) indicated a strong dominance towards the mission benefits, especially the importance of being more socially inclusive. The programme was designed to provide progression opportunities for students who wanted to stay locally and who didn't have the level of qualifications at the time of entry necessary to gain entry to the New University BA Business. It was conceived as a WP programme and was succeeding in recruiting cohorts with a greater social mix than was usual for New University. This was described by Mark in the following quotation:

'I think from the point of view of the students the benefits have been absolutely enormous.... Quite an increasingly high proportion of the HND students do come to us and very few of them fail to graduate ...So there's a large number of graduates ... with a [New University] degree and ... a good university experience, academically, socially, the whole thing, who otherwise wouldn't have had it.'

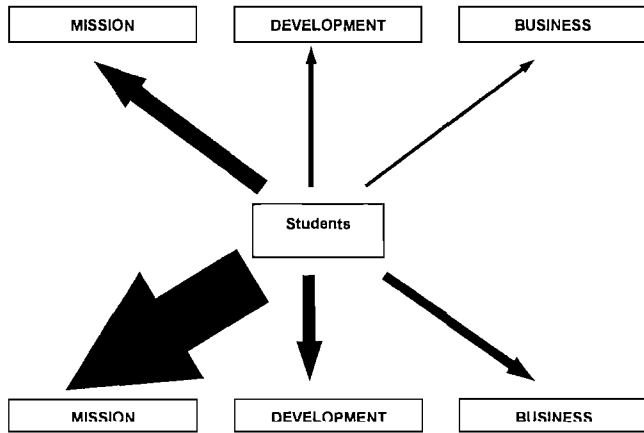
Mark, Programme Director, NU. (142: 431)

Finally, for the PCET programme (Figure 9.1f) the benefits for students were perceived to be providing opportunities for a group of adult education students to gain qualifications as FE lecturers. By developing close links with the University College the students (FE lecturers themselves) also gained access to the resources of the HEI for their own professional practice. They therefore were gaining benefits both as students and as members of staff.

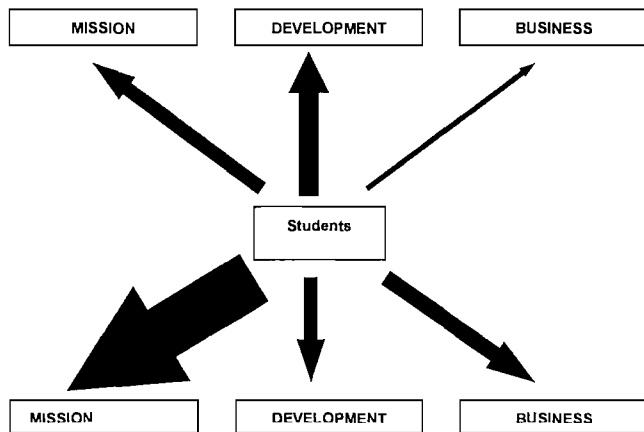
The indication from this analysis is that members of staff involved in developing the programmes perceived that the advantages to students were immense and it was the satisfaction of 'knowing' this that added to

Figure 9.1 Perceived benefits models for students from the participants

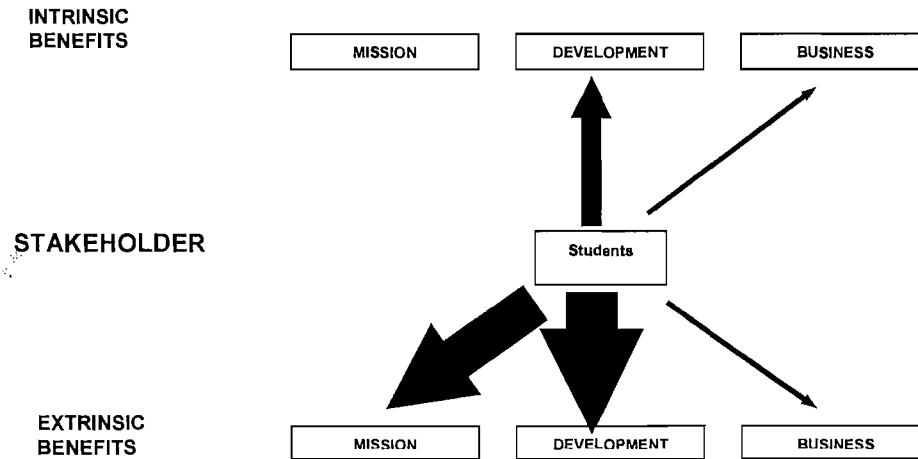
(a) Working with Children, Old University



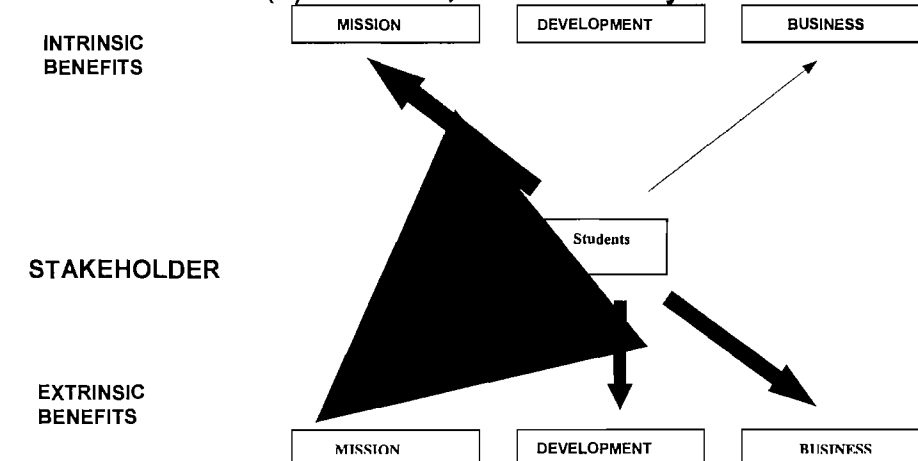
(c) Early Years, New University



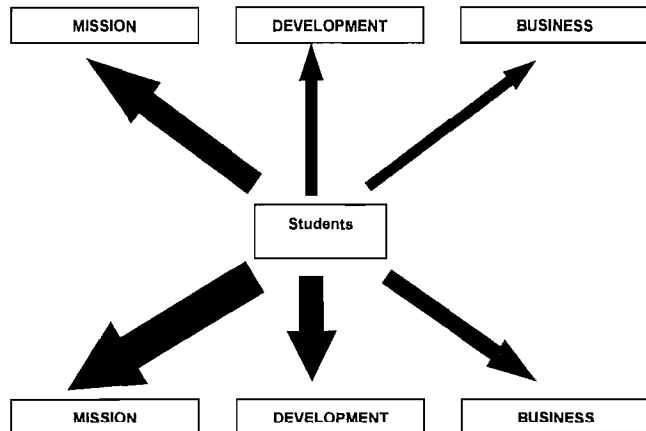
(b) Canine Assistance Studies, Old University



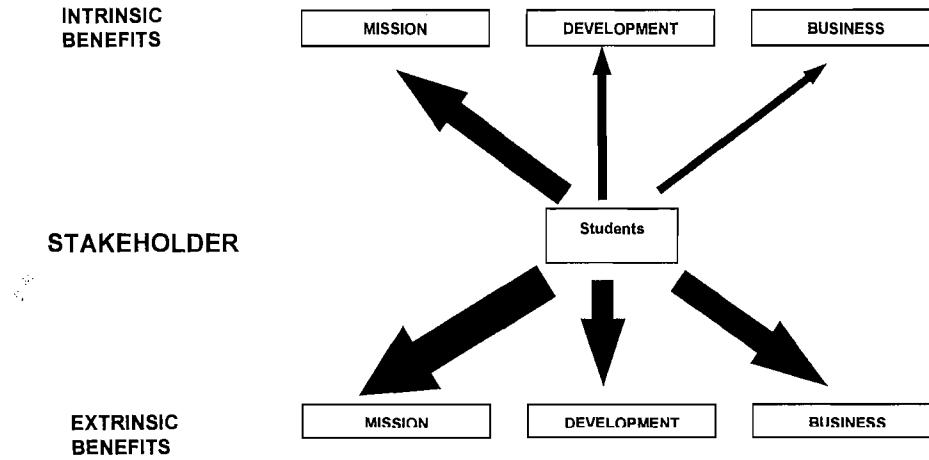
(d) Business, New University



(e) Child and Youth Studies,
University College



(f) PCET, University College



their own reported personal satisfaction. An interesting follow - up research study would be to evaluate the success of collaborative programmes from the students' perspective to see whether this staff view is supported. The analysis here and that offered in Chapter 6 again suggests some lessons that can be learned from this research which might in future affect practice:

Findings from this Research

- **Participants in collaborative curriculum development partnerships distinguished the benefits that accrued to their institutions, their students and to themselves. To persist they needed to feel that the benefits outweighed the difficulties.**
- **The HEI participants reported that the key benefits for them were the intrinsic developmental benefits, the extrinsic mission benefits and the intrinsic business benefits.**
- **FE and employer partners reported the intrinsic developmental benefits as being most important.**
- **Employers also valued intrinsic business benefits particularly in the impact on staff recruitment and retention.**
- **The perception of staff was that for students the main benefits accrued from the availability of more socially inclusive programmes, more flexible delivery, transferable qualifications and career enhancement.**
- **The positive impact on students was an important factor for increasing the motivation of staff.**

9.3 The Impact of the Barriers

RQ 2: How do the barriers to collaborative partnership affect the processes involved in curriculum development in higher education?

In Chapter 7, the barriers affecting the collaborative process were analysed using interviews and questionnaire responses. Five groups of barriers were identified which affected the progress of these partnerships and which had to be overcome. These were shown in Figure 7.8 and consisted of barriers associated with resources, skills, QA, culture and the external environment. In Section 3.9.2, I examined the barriers to collaboration that had come from a range of different studies (Field, 1995; Wilson and Charlton, 1997; Jones 2000; Tett *et al*, 2001; Clegg and McNulty, 2002). Some of the barriers are common to most partnerships and were also found here (e.g. communication difficulties and resources) but this research has revealed a number of barriers which specifically relate to the nature of collaborative curriculum development.

In Chapter 7, the analysis revealed a high degree of commonality between the partners, sectors and programmes in perceived barriers, but there were also some differences (Figure 7.5) and these were used to develop a typology (or classification) of barriers affecting collaborative curriculum development partnerships. Typologies require common characteristics to be identified for the whole group. In this case, one dimension that has been used is the **prevalence** of each barrier. Some of the barriers identified are **specific** to a small number of programmes. For these, the barriers may have a big impact on the partnership but they are not found to be a common feature. One example of this was *weak leadership* which was a major feature of the early foundation degree in health in Old University but which figured strongly in the minds of those interviewed in the *Working with Children* programme. The perception of *weak leadership* wasn't actually a problem

with this programme but still figured strongly in the collective memory of the partners. Other barriers were **perennial** in that they are mentioned in every programme. There is also an intermediate group of barriers which were **common** in programmes (i.e. they are mentioned in the interviews of four or five of the programmes in this case study).

A second dimension to this typology can also be identified: the **response** required by the team. In some cases it was enough that there was **recognition** of the barrier and little or no action was required either because there was nothing that the team could do (as in the case of a *vulnerable future*, for example) or because the barrier was so intractable that the team could have little impact on it in the time frame of the collaboration (*institutional culture* for example).

A second category of the response dimension was the group of barriers which needed **consideration** of whether the team should take action or not. There is a decision to be taken here and this should be brought out into open discussion and the partners need to decide what they are going to do. For example, where *overloaded individuals* were reported, the partnership had to decide whether to accept the situation and live with the consequences or whether to seek action in terms of managing workloads or by-passing these individuals.

The third category in this dimension of the typology was the type of barrier which required **action**. In this case the barrier was so fundamental to the progress of the curriculum development that it could not be ignored and some action had to be taken. An example of this was *lack of expertise*. Curriculum development is complex and it requires expert input in terms of the subject content, the pedagogy and the QA processes. The programme team needed to be sure that it had access to all the required expertise at an early stage or made provisions for obtaining it if it was missing.

Figure 9.2a shows this two dimensional typology of barriers with **prevalence** shown vertically and the **response** required shown horizontally. In Figure 9.2b the cells in the typology only show the groups to which the barriers belong. In the figures, resource barriers are shown by an R; QA barriers by a Q; Skills barriers by an S; Cultural barriers by a C; and External Environment barriers by an E. Although it was important for teams to be aware of all the potential barriers to progress, those that required a response were of particular importance. In these situations, effective leadership can mitigate the worst effects and can facilitate progress.

Figure 9.2a Two dimensional typology of barriers

	ACTION	CONSIDERATION	RECOGNITION
PERENNIAL	Finance R QA Procedures Q Time Constraints R Lack of Expertise S Resources R Lack of Understanding S Equity of Provision Q	Unequal Power C Change of Personnel R Overloaded individuals R Different Priorities C Resistance to Change C	Institutional culture C Lack of Employer Support E Lack of Trust C
COMMON	Poor Communication Q Difficult to control and Manage S	Lack of Responsiveness C Difficult Work S	Limited Student Numbers E HE Ivory Tower C Vulnerable Future E
SPECIFIC	Weak Leadership S	Institutional Change R Competition E	

Figure 9.2b Typology of barriers showing the barrier groups

	ACTION	CONSIDERATION	RECOGNITION
PERENNIAL	Resources (R) Quality Assurance (Q) Skills (S)	Resources Culture (C)	Culture External Environment (E)
COMMON	Quality Assurance Skills	Culture Skills	Culture External Environment
SPECIFIC	Skills	Resources External Environment	

By studying the tables in Figure 9.2, it was evident that the categories of barriers tended to occur in some cells and not others and their position in the typology are shown in Figure 9.3. The diagram for Resources (9.3a) shows that these barriers were perennial and in each case the resource barrier required a response. Decisions needed to be taken at an early stage about how the curriculum development and the partnership would be resourced and where the resources were going to come from. They needed to be financed up-front through some sort of development fund or the resources needed to be provided by goodwill by the partners. The data suggests that these decisions should be overt and understood.

Figure 9.3 The Position of Each Barrier Group within the Typology

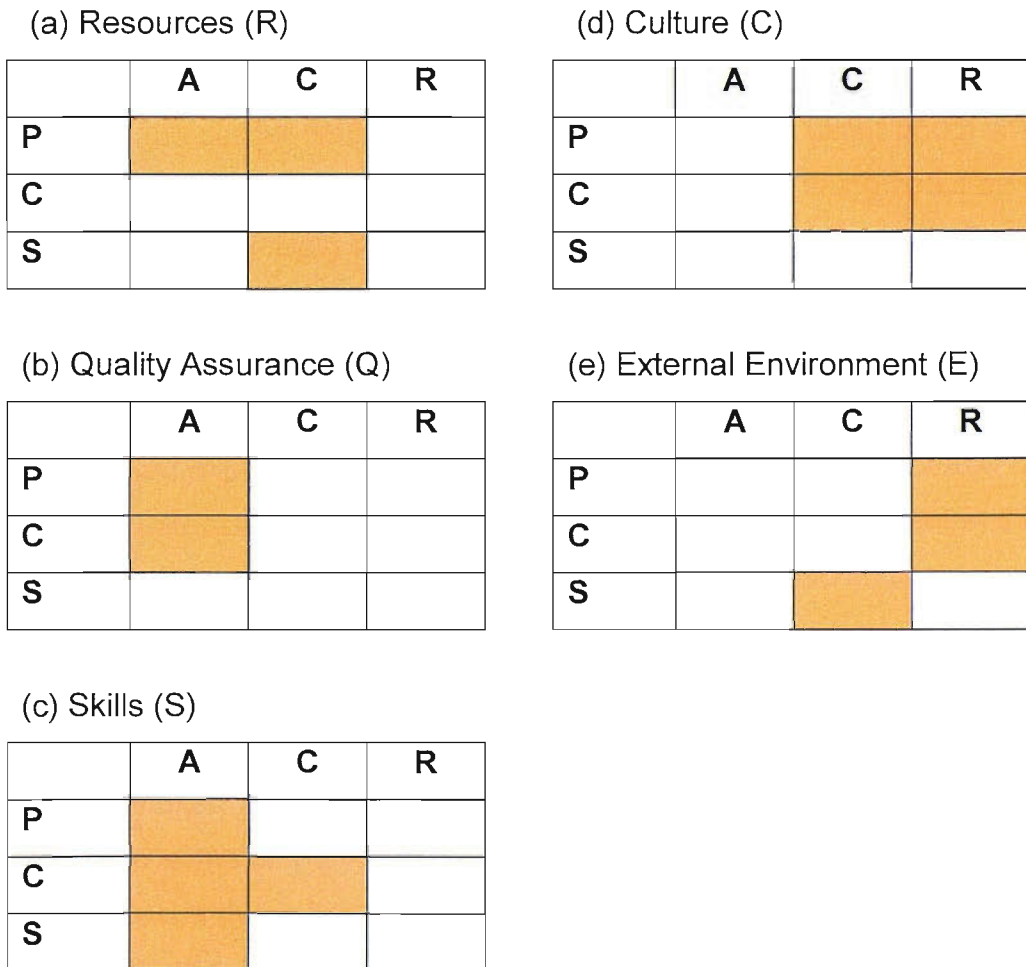


Figure 9.3b shows the position in the typology of the QA barriers. These were present in all the programmes to some degree and they all required a response. The inspection frameworks required that institutions comply with QA guidelines and therefore these barriers have to be overcome. It would be helpful to the process of collaboration if these issues were explicitly understood by the partners and dealt with from the start.

The position of the skills barriers (Figure 9.3c), indicate that they were present in all programmes and, more importantly, they required a response. Skills deficits in curriculum development, partnership work or team work were critical and had to be addressed to ensure a successful outcome.

In terms of the cultural barriers (9.3d) it was clear from Chapter 7 that they are always present but, in most cases, there is little to be done to mitigate their effects. In some cases (for example, *unequal power* or *resistance to change*) the barrier could be discussed and a decision taken about what could be done. In most cases, the teams found that nothing could be done apart from recognising that the cultural differences might cause difficulty. It was a case of forewarned was forearmed.

Finally, there are the external environment barriers (9.3e) which should be recognised explicitly but over which the partnership has little control. Some specific external environment factors may require a response (as in the case of *competition* here) but they form the political, economic and social context within which all the partners have to work.

In terms of the journey travelled by the partners as they sought to develop the curriculum, the evidence indicates that resources, skills and QA are critical in terms of the teams needing to make decisions about how they would deal with the barriers. As the evidence showed in Chapter 8, making decisions about resources, ensuring the team had the required skills mix and

being explicit about QA were all seen by the participants as important ways of improving the chances of a successful outcome.

A third element which was identified in Chapter 7 can be added to the typology. This is the **significance** of the barrier i.e. how important it is relative to the others. For example, the **perennial** group of barriers in Figure 9.2a could be split into two; those that were perennial **and** significant (i.e. they were always present and in the top ten list of barriers for most programmes), and those that were perennial but less significant (i.e. they were always present but did not necessarily rate very highly). Figure 9.4 shows the barriers that fell into each of these categories.

Figure 9.4: The Significance of the perennial barriers

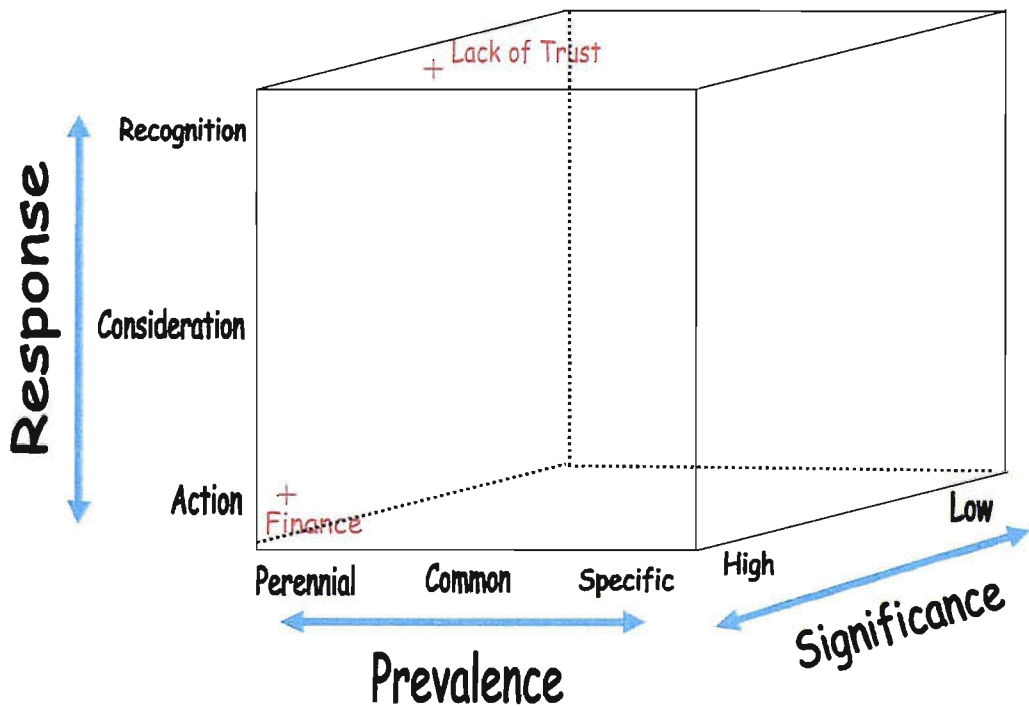
	ACTION	CONSIDERATION	RECOGNITION
PERENNIAL AND SIGNIFICANT	Finance R QA Procedures Q Time Constraints R Lack of Expertise S		Institutional culture C
PERENNIAL AND LESS SIGNIFICANT	Resources R Lack of Understanding S Equity of Provision Q	Unequal Power C Change of Personnel R Overloaded individuals R Different Priorities C Resistance to Change C	Lack of Employer Support E Lack of Trust C

The significance of the barrier will affect the importance of the decisions taken by the partnership to overcome it. Even for barriers that are highly specific and affect only one programme, the barrier may have a high significance in its impact on progress in the curriculum development. Conceptually, therefore, the typology needs to show this third dimension: that of significance (Figure 9.5).

The cube demonstrates the interrelationship between the three dimensions of the typology. The locations of two barriers have been shown. Finance was identified as a perennial barrier of high significance which had to be acted

upon to ensure the development could proceed. In this research *Lack of Trust* on the other hand was a barrier which was perennial, of lower significance and, although was recognised as a barrier that could impact on the progress of the collaboration, was overcome by the teams by working together over a period of time in a consistent way – there are no quick fixes. It is interesting to note that trust does not feature as the most significant factor. This may be due to the fact that this research essentially looked at successful partnerships which worked and where trust issues had largely been overcome.

Figure 9.5: A conceptual model of barriers in collaborative curriculum development



This is a conceptual model and its purpose is to assist the understanding of the interplay of the three dimensions of barriers thus providing a better understanding of their impact. The prevalence and the significance of the

barriers is important in determining the response. Those of greatest significance or of high prevalence (and particularly those that are **both** significant and prevalent) are the barriers which need to be anticipated and planned for at the start of the development process. Four barriers in this study have been shown to fall into the category of being significant, prevalent **and** requiring action: insufficient financial resource; the QA procedures; time constraints; and a lack of expertise. Overcoming these should feature in any suggested framework of good practice.

Findings from this Research

- **A typology with three dimensions (prevalence; response and significance) was developed from the research evidence and it can be used to classify the barriers affecting collaborative curriculum development.**
- **Four barriers were identified as being prevalent, significant and needing a response: allocating adequate financial resources; being explicit about the QA procedures; allocating adequate time for staff to do the work; and ensuring the team has the expertise it needs (both in terms of partnership work and curriculum development).**
- **One barrier was identified as being prevalent and significant but about which little could be done: institutional culture. This barrier should be recognised as a potential problem which can affect the understanding and behaviour of the partners.**

9.4 Overcoming the Barriers and Facilitating Collaborative Development

RQ3: How can the process of collaborative curriculum development be facilitated to encourage the government's policy objectives of widening participation in higher education and of workforce development?

A number of studies, discussed in Chapter 3, have considered the conditions which help a partnership prosper (e.g. Mohrman, Cohen and Mohrman, 1995; Pratt et al, 1998; Boyle and Brown, 2000; Jones, 2000; Wilson and Pirrie, 2000; Kezar, 2004). These revealed that there are a number of conditions which improve the chance of a partnership being sustainable and successful. In this research, I have concentrated on the ways that the collaborative partnerships in this case study managed to overcome the barriers and develop solutions which enabled the programmes to be developed and implemented. Whilst some of the factors are generic to all partnerships whatever the context, this study has identified a number of solutions which reflect the nature of partnerships for curriculum development.

In Chapter 8, the evidence from the interviews was used to analyse the ways that the curriculum development teams were able to overcome the barriers that they faced. These were shown in Figure 8.2 and on further analysis can be grouped into four clusters, shown in Figure 9.6 under the heading '**Solutions**'. These solutions represent the actions taken by the teams in this case study and result from experience. The first set (*clarity of purpose, commitment to aims, viability, and experience*) relate to the reasons for the programme and partnership. Earlier in this chapter, in Chapter 6 and in section 8.2, we saw that being clear about the purpose and committed to the aims was essential. The partners were only likely to persevere to overcome barriers if the resultant programme was perceived to be one that would be viable. A further factor is experience – more successful collaborations tend to be those where there is experience of successful partnership, where partners have worked together before and where the people already have the necessary skills. This was seen by the participants as a way of speeding up the process as in pre-existing partnerships relationships have already been forged and trust established. All of these factors provided answers to the '**Questions**' posed in the second column of the model which define the first '**Stage**' of the process which is the **PURPOSE**. Thus, from the outset,

everyone should be clear about why the programme is being developed, why it's being done in partnership and who the partners are.

The second cluster of solutions (*senior management involvement, partnership involvement, mutual understanding, trust, getting the right team and budgeting time and resources*) was about developing the partnership in such a way that it was ready to do its task. It involved relationship building, getting the endorsement from senior managers, developing trust and mutual understanding in the team if it hadn't worked together before, and ensuring that the key people had time to spend on the project. The questions at this stage are about **COMMITMENT** to the project in practice as well as in theory. As one participant said, it's about getting senior managers '*to put their money where their mouth is*'. Stages one and two (**Purpose** and **Commitment**) can take a long time, and this research suggests that it is time well-spent. Even at the expense of some frustration at slow initial progress, getting the purpose defined well and ensuring that all the partners are on-board and committed to providing the resources necessary is essential.

The third cluster (*leadership, strong management, communication, memorandum of agreement and QA*) related to the project moving forward. It involved putting in place the processes and systems which facilitate the **MANAGEMENT** of the curriculum development across the whole partnership. The questions related to both leadership and management. Leadership was required in both the partnership and the curriculum development. In most of the programmes, this was vested in one person – the programme director. It was seen to be a very heavy load for one person to carry and in all cases the workload allocation granted to that person was the same as for a non-collaborative programme. This underestimated the level of input required by those leading collaborative programmes and was the main cause of stress identified by the participants.

Figure 9.6 A Framework for Overcoming the Barriers

Solutions

Clarity of purpose
Commitment to aims
Viability
Experience

Senior management involvement
Partnership involvement
Mutual understanding
Trust
Getting the right team
Budgeting time and resources

Leadership
Strong management
Communication
Memorandum of Agreement
Quality Assurance

Evaluate success
Staff development
Develop student support
Outreach

Questions

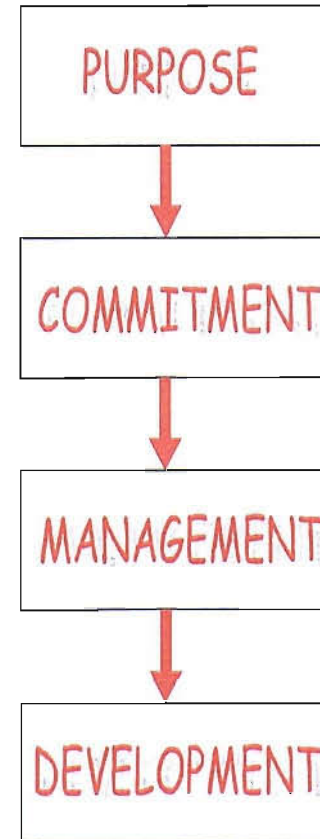
Why are we doing this project?
Why do this in partnership?

Are we committed to the project and partnership?
Can we work together?
Can we commit the resources?

Have we got the right leadership?
Have we got the management skills?
How do we manage the processes?

How can we make it better?

Stages



The final cluster (*evaluate success, staff development, outreach and student support*) relate to evaluation and enhancement. This stage of the process related to the programme once it was operational. Partnership work requires the collaboration to continue into the implementation phase. The key question, now that the process was underway, was how can we make it better for the partners and for students? This **DEVELOPMENT** stage represented a circular process of implementation, evaluation and further change as necessary as part of normal teaching quality enhancement.

The framework consists of four stages:

- **PURPOSE**
- **COMMITMENT**
- **MANAGEMENT**
- **DEVELOPMENT.**

At each stage, there were key questions to be asked by the partnership in order to strengthen the process and to pre-empt many of the barriers seen earlier in the chapter. The solutions suggested here draw on the combined experience from the six partnerships and provide a framework for overcoming the barriers which should assist future practice:

Findings from this Research

- **A framework for overcoming the barriers consists of four stages: defining the purpose; promoting commitment; displaying effective management and leadership; and ensuring continuous development.**
- **At each stage, there are measures which can be put in place to anticipate potential problems and facilitate collaborative curriculum development.**

9.5 Developing a Unifying Model for Effective Collaborative Curriculum Development

The purpose of this research was to investigate how the partnerships formed and the nature of the processes that eventually led to a successful outcome. Sections 9.2-9.4 have reviewed the evidence and have identified a number of conceptual outcomes and implications for practice. In this section, I have brought the conclusions together into a unifying model for collaborative curriculum development (Figure 9.7). The model seeks to look at the processes at work as a whole and shows how, as the work is undertaken and the people involved tackle the difficulties, develop the curriculum and prepare for implementation, the individual players become part of a functioning partnership.

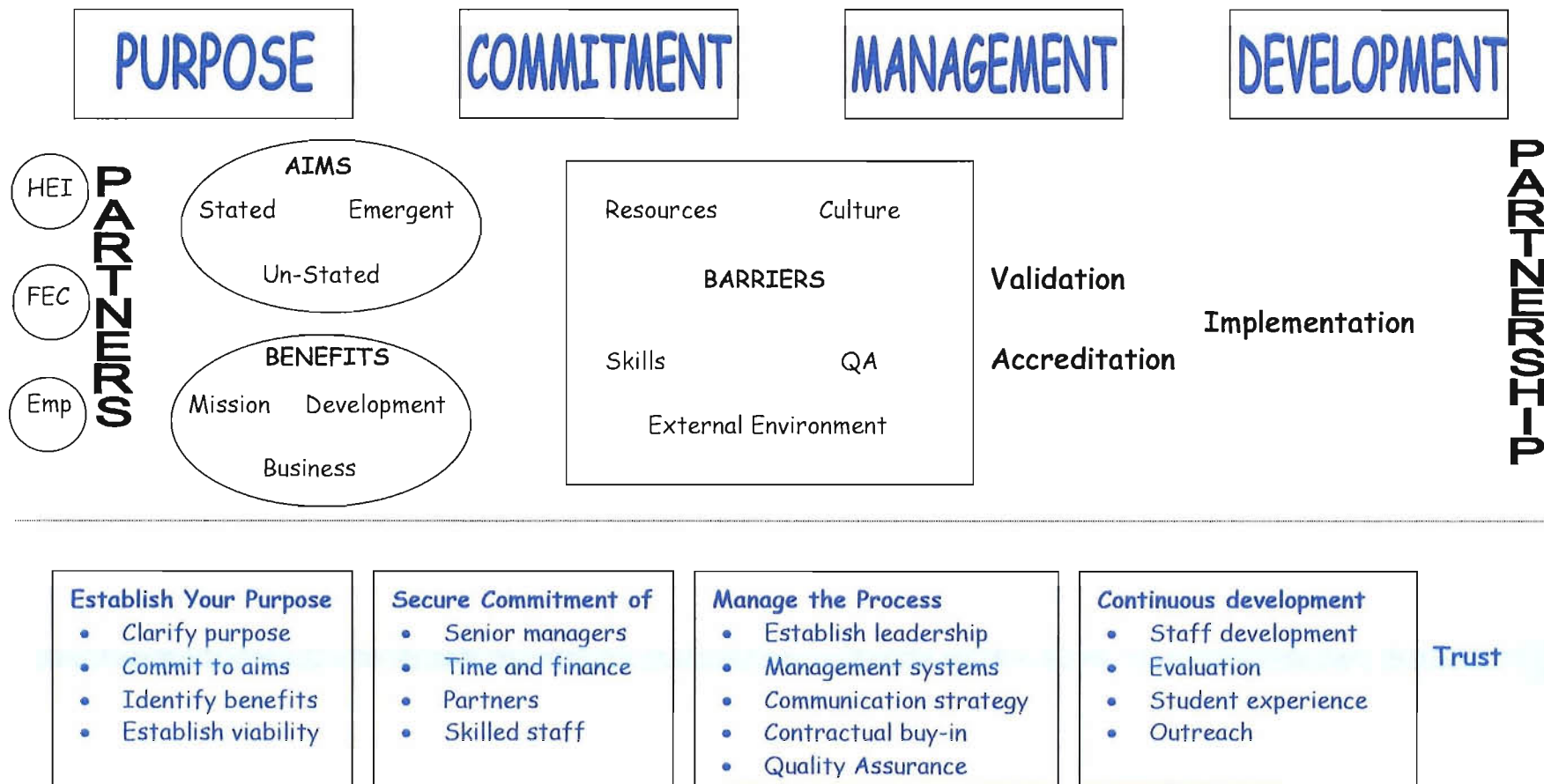
In Figure 9.7, the model uses the four stages identified in the work on overcoming the barriers to indicate the development of the partnership over time. At the start of the process the partners exist as individual entities with their own aims and perceptions of benefits that might come from working on the project. Their reasons for engaging are many and may or may not be revealed as the work progresses. Nevertheless at this early stage of defining the **purpose** as much clarity as possible should be elicited from the participants about the purpose of what is being undertaken and the level of commitment to the aims of the development. The motivation of the individual partners will be increased if they believe that the outcomes will be worth it and so the viability of the final programme should be investigated and the information shared. This early stage is a very important one as it establishes the foundations on which the partnership will grow. Partners who have worked together before and who already understand one another and have a high degree of trust should be able to make much quicker progress than where they are coming together for a first time.

Once the purpose has been established, the partners need to establish **commitment** of the major players. Clearly this should include the participants themselves but it should also involve the senior managers as important resource decisions will need to be made early on. Some direct finance may be needed to pay for specific things such as library provision or validation fees, but there will also be a need to release resource in terms of time allocation, workload and the freeing up of key staff with the required skills sets. The commitment needs to be at both the institutional level and the individual participant level.

The commitment stage, is an important first step of **management** of the process as a whole as it will provide the resources and goodwill to enable any barriers to be overcome. Those barriers that can be overcome by decisions being made can be anticipated and dealt with before they become a problem. Barriers which exist but which little can be done about should be identified and articulated by the partnership so that they are well understood and do not stall the progress. For example, the contractual differences between FECs and HEIs will mean that there are differences in how staff can operate. By surfacing them and discussing the possible impact we have seen that the effects of these differences can be minimised.

The management stage is where the systems and processes are put in place to enable the work to progress. Leadership skills and effective management will allow the partnership to establish a working relationship. A clearly articulated communication strategy will facilitate the process of consolidating the partnership and enabling the curriculum development to proceed. Specific management tools such as contractual agreements and the implementation of QA procedures will assist in developing effective processes. By the end of this stage the curriculum should be ready for validation and the delivery partners should have been accredited. As the curriculum is implemented and the programme gets underway, the model

Figure 9.7 A unifying model of effective collaborative curriculum development



moves into the final stage which is that of **development**. There should be a continuous process of evaluation of both the programme and the partnership and both will need to continue to be managed and nurtured. Staff development will need to continue and the student experience will need to be evaluated and enhanced over time. Continued commitment will depend on the success of the programme and outreach processes to ensure recruitment, thus reinforcing the view that the programme is needed. By this final stage, the hope will be that the partners have grown closer together and have been forged into a true partnership with a high degree of mutual trust.

This unified model is clearly an ideal which few collaborative curriculum development partnerships may be able to match. However, it does provide a framework which reflects the evidence of the participants in this research. The implications for practice from each of the elements of the model have already been identified in the separate sections (9.2-9.4). In the next section, the policy implications of the findings of the research will be considered in brief.

9.6 In Conclusion: Some Policy Implications

As we have seen partnership work is a feature of many aspects of public service provision under New Labour and is set to continue to be so and this study has considered a very small element: the impact of this on the development of the undergraduate curriculum. The changes promoted in policy documents such as the Dearing Report (1997) and the establishment of new HE qualifications such as the foundation degrees (HEFCE, 2000) meant that HE was required to consider how it would provide a more socially inclusive service and help employers address the workforce modernisation agenda. As this research has indicated, partnerships between HE, FE and

employers can develop programmes that serve these policy aims but the work is hard and economically marginal at best. In this concluding section I offer a few brief observations on how such work could be supported better by both government and individual institutions.

9.6.1 Policy Implications for Government

The preceding sections have identified a number of significant problems facing those people who are trying to respond to policy initiatives relating to WP and workforce development. Partnership is challenging and the establishment of multi-agency groups to develop new curricula at undergraduate level, informed by the needs of employers, has implications for future government policy. If closer working relationships are going to develop between educational and employer partners then this needs to be facilitated by government and not hindered. The following points are some of the key policy implications for government from this research:

- **Provision of more resources for inter-agency and collaborative working**

The financial returns to those engaging in collaborative work of this type mean that, even where there is a slight funding uplift as in the case of the foundation degrees, institutions see the work as marginal. Working flexibly, in partnership, in multiple locations including the workplace and providing programmes which meet the need of students requires premium funding. Without this, as this research has shown, the adopters of this mode of working may decide not to continue and revert to easier (but not necessarily policy-driven) ways of providing programmes.

- **Getting informed employers involved**

The nature of employer involvement in curriculum development for HE needs to be more carefully thought through. Employer engagement can help

programmes be more relevant to the workplace, enhance graduate employability, assist regional economic growth, and can provide a richer learning experience for the students. However, investment is needed in developing in employers an understanding of how they can get involved, helping them articulate what they want and exploring the best models of supporting their workforces in gaining higher level qualifications and skills. Securing informed employer engagement has been found by this research to be a major problem for educational establishments. This supports the conclusions from other studies such as the evaluation of the early foundation degrees (QAA, 2005). To realise the vision that Ruth Kelly sets out in her letter to the Funding Council quoted at the start of this chapter, significant work needs to be done with employers to equip them for the leading role the government wants to see.

- **Developing a more seamless FE/HE system**

The evidence from this research is that the government's goal of a seamless interface between higher and further education is far from being realised with different cultures, discourses, contracts, pay levels, entitlements and qualification levels being reported as barriers by the participants. Furthermore, convergence between the sectors is seen by the participants in this research as being a threat to the independence of FE, and to the recruitment to and quality of programmes in HE. The view of these participants was that any move to bring FE and HE closer together was a cynical attempt to provide undergraduate education on the cheap.

- **Promote structures to support Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to employ more graduates and to support training**

The programmes in this research were working well at providing both WP opportunities and workforce development but, although these employers were willing to get involved, they were less supportive of providing

opportunities for staff to attend the programmes. It was the employers of large workforces such as the public services and national businesses that were able to provide support in terms of study time and assistance with fees to enable staff to take advantage of the opportunities. Mechanisms to enable SMEs also to get involved in such programme developments and to access the undergraduate pool should be developed further, maybe through Regional Development Associations. Such activity would also provide a way of promoting increased economic growth in the regions.

9.6.2 Policy Implications for Partner Organisations

In addition to the implications for government, there are a number for the partner organisations involved in collaborative curriculum development. These are as follows:

- **Recognise the cost of developing these partnerships and make resources available to the teams**

In each of the programmes in this collective case study no resources were allocated up-front. Usually members of staff were asked to take on the work in addition to their normal working load. Each partner institution had to bear the cost of developing the programme, validation and accreditation. In addition, costs resulted from the provision of a distributed model of HE on multiple sites with the increased costs of learning infrastructure. There isn't usually any new money for developments of this kind and institutions have to bear the cost on the promise of a funding stream resulting from successful recruitment. It should be normal practice for institutions to establish a business case for a new programme in advance of curriculum development and this should be shared with partners.

This did not occur in any of the programmes specified in this study, although most had some kind of market analysis in the initial stages. It was reported in several of the programmes that although this cursory market analysis had indicated a large and buoyant market, when it finally came to marketing the programmes recruitment was disappointingly low. No programme development team in this case study undertook a risk analysis or a sensitivity analysis before embarking on the development. This would suggest a more business-like approach to programme development is needed, particularly in collaborative partnerships where the costs and risks to reputation are greater.

- **Adoption of more strategic approach to partnership development to build relationships and cut down the lead-in time**

As we have seen, partnerships take a long time to mature and relationship-building requires skills of leadership and management. This research found that HE and FE establishments were beginning to see the value of a more strategic approach with local networks being formalised into partnership arrangements with accredited colleges learning consortia. In both the new university and the university college these involved institutional heads and senior staff taking a leading role in the development of a regional strategy. Where employers and business leaders are also involved this may assist in promoting regional growth.

- **Value staff who demonstrate the skills to undertake partnership work**

Several of the participants indicated that there is a scarcity of people with the required skills to undertake this type of work. Such people need to have excellent interpersonal skills, an ability to lead and to work as part of a team, an understanding or a willingness to learn about the other partners **and** the academic skills and know-how to develop a curriculum, get it validated and run the programme. This is highly skilled work and yet the experience of

those involved was that they were undervalued, stressed and disadvantaged when it came to promotion considerations. The perception was that collaborative work was seen as second-class and staff who are asked to do the work are not given enough support to do it. In HEIs, it is seen as time-consuming work of low value and it takes people away from research perceived as the high value work providing a route to promotion and advancement. If the capacity to undertake partnership work is going to grow, those who have the skills to do the work are going to need to be encouraged to continue to work in this area and not to move into less-demanding, or more personally rewarding, areas.

9.7 In Conclusion: Future Research Questions

Several areas of future research potential can be identified from this study which would extend it in terms of looking at aspects of collaborative curriculum development which have not been covered here. There are many different directions that could be explored but I offer four here as being particularly pertinent to this study: the reasons why some collaborative partnerships fail; the impact of collaborative programmes on the students' experience; the business benefits in terms of workforce development and modernisation; and the influence of employer engagement in the curriculum on graduate employability.

- **Why Some Collaborative Partnerships Fail**

This research project was a collective case study of six partnerships which succeeded in developing a collaborative undergraduate programme. It focussed on the perceived benefits and barriers of participants who have been part of a relatively positive experience. It was not possible to talk to people who had had a bad experience or those who were not part of the process. An interesting follow up study would be to interview participants in

failed partnerships, those who have stopped working in partnership and those who have chosen not to participate in collaborative arrangements to investigate their perceptions and reasons for not being involved. A lot can be learned from negative experiences and non-participation in policy initiatives.

- **Impact on students' experience**

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, it would be interesting to research the impact of collaborative programmes on the students' experience and whether learning in a partnership context offers a richer, impoverished or just different experience than in those developed and delivered by one provider on a single campus. Distributed learning and the equity of experience in programmes delivered across multiple sites is a significant QA issue. These programmes include significant periods of integrated work-based learning often provided by employers who are not accustomed to providing the quality of supervisory support available in placements in the more traditional areas such as education and health. Student support in such cases and the impact on learning of different forms of mentoring and supervision would provide useful empirical evidence during the curriculum development process of future collaborative programmes.

- **Business benefits in terms of workforce development and modernisation**

Another rich area of research would be to investigate the impact of collaborative processes as they become more mature during the implementation phase. As we have seen here, institutions and individuals need to be convinced of the merits of becoming involved and motivation is increased if the benefits can be demonstrated. It would be valuable to investigate the impact on business of these collaborative programmes and whether they fulfilled the aims of workforce training and modernisation. Employers have voiced a number of concerns relating to these programmes such as that gaining qualifications might mean that staff are more likely to

leave as they use their new skills in acquiring promotion. Workforce training and development may well be more easily satisfied than the structural change demanded within the workplace to provide staff with new challenges and working opportunities within their existing organisations. The view expressed in this research was that the early cohorts would demand changes in the workplace and this would provide an impetus for modernisation. It would be interesting to research whether such change is becoming evident.

- **The influence of employer engagement in the curriculum on graduate employability**

Employability of graduates is a concern in HE and in government as policy has, for some time, reflected the belief that a more highly skilled and qualified workforce would lead to a vibrant and sustainable knowledge based economy. Longitudinal research tracking the graduates of these programmes and their career trajectories would help identify whether there is a positive influence on graduate employability and long term career development of developing collaborative undergraduate programmes.

9.8 Summary

This research has considered why individuals and institutions get involved in collaborative partnerships to develop undergraduate programmes, what barriers are encountered along the way and how they can be overcome. It has looked at some of the issues which confront those who are trying to address the government's policies of widening participation in HE and workforce modernisation. From an analysis of the data a framework of the aims of such programmes has been constructed (Figures 6.3 and 6.4) which was further developed into a model to assist in the analysis of the perceived

benefits of collaboration (Figure 6.5). Five groups of barriers to collaborative curriculum development were found to affect the process (Figure 7.8) and the research has suggested a typology of barriers based on their prevalence, significance and the type of appropriate response (Figure 9.5).

Analysis of the ways that the curriculum development teams tackled the problems they faced and overcame the barriers provides a framework (Figure 9.6) which was then used as the underpinning structure in a unifying model of effective partnership development (Figure 9.7). In this model, the four stages involved in the establishment of a partnership for curriculum development were elaborated: defining the **purpose**; securing **commitment**; displaying effective **management** and leadership; and ensuring continuous **development**. Finally, the implications for future collaborative undergraduate curriculum developments and ways of changing government and institutional policy have been suggested so that lessons learnt by the participants in this research can be shared by those working on programmes in the future.

This final chapter has drawn out a number of implications for practice which may inform future practitioners of ways of working which would facilitate the development of collaborative partnerships for curriculum development. The evidence is that the government's policy of encouraging the education sector to work with employers to develop needs-led curriculum is going to continue and that the Funding Councils will be asked to ensure that resources flow to encourage further development in this direction. This research provides a contribution to the debate on how this can best be done and identifies a number of avenues for future study. The opportunities for curriculum change exist – but there is a question over whether there is the will and the skill to make it happen.

APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Collaborative partnerships for policy-led curriculum development of undergraduate programmes in the United Kingdom

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Rosalind Foskett,
Associate Dean (Enterprise and Innovation)
School of Education,
University of Southampton,
Highfield,
SO17 1BJ

Telephone: 023 8059 7248

Email: rf1@soton.ac.uk

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio/video recorded

5. I agree to anonymised quotes from the interview to be used in the thesis and publications

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

APPENDIX 2a Interview Schedule (Senior Manager/Business Representative)

1. About the interviewee

- 1.1 Name
- 1.2 Organisation
- 1.3 Position in the organisation
- 1.4 Involvement with the collaborative curriculum development?
- 1.5 What was your prior experience (of working in collaboration, WP or workforce development)?
- 1.6 Name of course development involved with?
- 1.7 Level of course involved with?
- 1.8 Stage of development of the curriculum?

2. About the Collaborative Curriculum Development

- 2.1 Do you have an institutional/business strategy for Business/HE/FE partnership?
- 2.2 Who is usually responsible for initiating collaborative developments?
- 2.3 Who leads the development process for your organisation?
- 2.4 What are the main aims for collaborative curriculum development for your business?
- 2.5 In what ways does your business/institution support collaborative curriculum development?
- 2.6 How involved are you, at institutional level, with WP? Do you have a strategy and what part does collaborative curriculum development play in this?
- 2.7 How involved are you, at institutional level, with workforce development? Do you have a strategy and what part does collaborative curriculum development play in this?

3. Barriers to curriculum development

- 3.1 Are you aware of any difficulties that impeded progress in the curriculum development process?
- 3.2 How were these overcome?
- 3.3 Were there any issues that were not resolved?
- 3.4 What impact did these difficulties have on the development process?
- 3.5 Who was involved in conflict resolution?
- 3.6 Was the nature of the difficulties confined to particular individuals, to types of partner or about general issues?

4. Organisational Structure

- 4.1 How are partners represented in the Institutional/HE Management groups?
- 4.2 Are senior managers involved in the management of collaborative development?
- 4.3 Were you involved in the validation process? If so, how?
- 4.4 How are collaborative curriculum developments managed?
- 4.5 What institutional policies are there which govern collaborative partnerships (eg Memoranda of Agreement; compacts; letters of intent)

5. Benefits of collaborative curriculum development

- 5.1 What benefits has collaborative curriculum development brought your organisation
- 5.2 Are there any disadvantages to your organisation getting involved in collaborative curriculum development?
- 5.3 What factors are most important in developing a curriculum which enables widening participation/workforce development?
- 5.4 Do you intend for your organisation to get involved in further collaborative curriculum developments?

APPENDIX 2b Interview Schedule (curriculum development team)

1. About the interviewee

- 1.1 Name?
- 1.2 Organisation?
- 1.3 Position in the organisation?
- 1.4 Involvement with the collaborative curriculum development?
- 1.5 Name of course development involved with?
- 1.6 Level of course involved with?
- 1.7 Stage of development of the curriculum?

2. About the Collaborative Curriculum Development

- 2.1 Nature of the partnership – who are the other partners?
- 2.2 Who was responsible for initiating the development?
- 2.3 Who led the development process?
- 2.4 What was the main role in the curriculum development process of each of the partners?
- 2.5 What were the main aims of this curriculum development?
- 2.6 Why did your institution get involved in collaborative curriculum development?
- 2.7 Why did you get involved in collaborative curriculum development?

3. Barriers to curriculum development

- 3.1 At the start of the curriculum development process were there any initial difficulties which impeded progress?
- 3.2 How were these overcome?
- 3.3 Did any other barriers to progress develop during the developmental phase?
- 3.4 How were differences between the partners resolved?
- 3.5 Were there any issues that were not resolved?
- 3.6 What impact did these difficulties have on the development process?
- 3.7 Who was involved in conflict resolution?
- 3.8 Was the nature of the difficulties confined to particular individuals, to types of partner or about general issues?

4. Organisational Structure

- 4.1 How was the curriculum development process organised?
- 4.2 Did you discuss different curriculum frameworks/models before agreeing a curriculum framework?
- 4.3 Does a specific curriculum development approach underpin your programme? If so, which?
- 4.4 How did you decide on the teaching and learning approaches to be adopted?
- 4.5 How did you decide on operational matters e.g. timetable, modes of delivery, location of delivery?
- 4.6 How did you decide on the content of the curriculum?
- 4.7 How was widening participation/workforce development needs built into the curriculum?
- 4.8 How are partners represented in the development groups? Management groups?
- 4.9 Are senior managers involved in collaborative development of this kind at all?
- 4.10 Who prepared the documentation for validation?
- 4.11 Were you involved in the validation process? If so, how?
- 4.12 Did you feel included in all parts of the curriculum development process? If not, which parts did you feel excluded from?

5. Benefits of collaborative curriculum development

- 5.1 What benefits has collaborative curriculum development brought your organisation?
- 5.2 What benefits has collaborative curriculum development brought you personally?
- 5.3 What have been the main successes of this programme?
- 5.4 What factors are most important in developing a curriculum which enables widening participation/workforce development?

Address

Date:

Dear,

I am undertaking research into curriculum development in higher education institutions and am writing to ask you if you are prepared to be involved with this. I am a member of staff at the School of Education at the University of Southampton and this research project is work I am undertaking in preparation for a PhD degree. The information given below, hopefully, explains what will be involved.

You are being invited to take part in this research study but before you decide whether to agree, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. You will find my contact details at the top of the page and at the end of this letter. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any further questions.

Title of the study:

Collaborative partnerships for policy-led curriculum development of undergraduate programmes in the United Kingdom

The purpose of the study:

The aim is to investigate the processes and issues involved in the development of collaborative partnerships for curriculum development in undergraduate programmes. It will focus on academic programmes that involve employer partners and where the aims of the programmes include widening participation and/or workforce development. The research is focused on three HEIs engaged in, and noted for, such work.

In each of the institutions, I will be interviewing a number of key people who are well informed about collaborative curriculum development and have some experience of it either directly or indirectly. The interviews will be semi-structured which means that there will be certain topics that I will want to cover but there will be plenty of opportunity for you to talk about the issues that you feel are most important. Further details of factual information will be collected by a short questionnaire.

Subsequently, I intend to interview national leaders who are involved in policy making such as a politician, a national business leader, or institutional heads in order to gain a wider perspective. Finally, I hope to be able to produce a questionnaire which can be sent to a wider selection of institutions and businesses to see whether some of the issues identified in the research can be applied more generally.

Why you have been chosen

I am asking for your help because you are involved in producing or running an undergraduate programme which has been developed in a partnership involving higher and further education, and business/employers. You may be involved in the programme's delivery or you may be involved in forming the strategy or policy for your organisation.

Do you have to take part?

It is up to you whether you decide to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form which indicates that you have had the purpose of the research explained and had an opportunity to find out further information. If you do decide to take part you can still withdraw **AT ANY TIME** during the research process and without giving a reason.

What will happen if you do decide to take part?

You will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview of approximately 60 minutes duration and will be asked to complete a short questionnaire (taking about 15 minutes to complete) which will provide me with more factual data about the programmes you work on. The interview, with your permission, will be audio-taped. A transcription of the tape (a type written version) will be provided to you soon after the interview to allow you to check the accuracy of the information provided.

I will contact you so that the interview is arranged for a time and a place which is convenient for you. At this point I will check to see whether you have any further questions or concerns. After the interview, the transcript will be posted back to you as soon as possible. You will be asked to return the completed questionnaire and checked transcript in a stamped addressed envelope which I will provide.

Where appropriate, I may request a copy of key documents relating to the programmes under study (where these are not already freely published on the web). Examples of these key documents would be validation documentation, memoranda of agreement with partners, minutes of key programme meetings.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

The main disadvantage of taking part is the time it will take to be interviewed. I hope that the interview itself would take about an hour. I would like for you to be free to speak with me for about 90 minutes. This will give some time for us to discuss any final issues and to have a few minutes time to spare. The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete. The transcript will take about half an hour to check through. The total time commitment should therefore be a maximum of two and a half hours spread over two or three weeks.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no direct benefits to you. However, the benefits of the research come from taking part in an exploratory study of a set of processes which

hitherto have been poorly researched. It is hoped that the study will provide information about how collaborative curriculum development can be made more effective by identifying key barriers to progress and success criteria.

Confidentiality

The interviews will be confidential. The audio-tape will either be transcribed by myself or my secretary who will follow the same rules regarding confidentiality. No-one else will see the transcript apart from you. Audio-tapes and transcripts will only be kept until the end of the study (expected to be the end of 2006) and will then be destroyed. In the meantime they will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and in a locked office at the University of Southampton. The computer that will be used for analysing the transcripts is password protected.

In writing up the research, individuals and institutions will have their anonymity protected by using codes and pseudonyms. However, in this research, the sample is small (about 50 interviews in total) and this limits the degree of anonymity which can be assured.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The main purpose of the research is to provide data for a thesis which will be submitted for examination for a PhD degree. I hope to be able to publish academic papers from the results in Education journals and to use the data for conference papers.

I expect to be able to provide a summary of the research findings to any participants who are interested at the end of the study.

Who has reviewed the study?

This proposal has been reviewed as part of the procedures used at the University of Southampton for monitoring research activity.

Contact for further information

**Rosalind Foskett,
School of Education,
University of Southampton,
Highfield,
Southampton,
SO17 1BJ**

Telephone: 023 8059 7248

Email: rf1@soton.ac.uk

Many thanks for reading through this information and considering offering your help.

APPENDIX 4 The Questionnaire

Basic Data Questionnaire

Form ID Number:

Research into Collaborative Curriculum Development at Undergraduate Level.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this questionnaire. Many institutions are becoming involved in partnerships across higher education, further education and public, private or voluntary employment sectors. As part of my work at the University of Southampton, I am undertaking research on the nature of curriculum development at undergraduate level in these partnerships and this questionnaire is seeking to provide detail for that research.

Completing the Questionnaire

Please complete all the questions if you can. Instructions for each question are given in italics.

The questions are organised into three sections:

Section 1: The programmes in your institution/business

This section aims to provide an overview of collaborative curriculum development in your organisation and provides detail of the scale of the activity. If you do not have access to this information, please go on to section 2.

Section 2: The main collaborative programme that you work on

This section explores the nature of the programme you work on, the nature of the collaborative partnership and the barriers and benefits that accrue from partnership work. If you do not work on a specific programme, start this section at question 2.11.

Section 3: About you

This section provides me with some information about you. Please note that no information will appear in the final report identifying an individual.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You can be assured of confidentiality. No-one, apart from my secretary and me, will have access to the questionnaire that you return. The ID number on the questionnaire form will be used by me to check with non-respondents to see if they need a replacement form or other information. All data will be anonymised and data will be aggregated.

COMPLETION AND RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRE FORMS

Please complete the form by _____ and post it to me in the envelope supplied.

Many thanks for your help in taking part in this research project.

Ros Foskett, ADDRESS

SECTION 1

This section aims to provide an overview of collaborative curriculum development in your organisation and provides detail of the scale of the activity. If you do not have access to this information, please go on to section 2.

1. The programmes in your institution

1.1 Has your institution/business produced, or are you producing, any undergraduate programmes in collaboration with another partner(s)?

Please give the number of collaborative programmes in each category:

	Number of programmes
(a) Honours Degree	_____
(b) Foundation Degree	_____
(c) Diploma of Higher Education	_____
(d) Certificate of Higher Education	_____
(e) Level 0/Foundation level	_____
(f) Other (<i>please specify</i>)	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

1.2 What types of partners have you worked with at each level?

(Please tick all the boxes that apply for your institution)

<i>Partner</i>	<i>FE College</i>	<i>HE Inst.</i>	<i>Public Service</i>	<i>Private Business</i>	<i>Voluntary Org.</i>	<i>Other (specify below)</i>
<i>Programme</i>						
Honours Degree						
Foundation Degree						
Diploma of HE						
Certificate of HE						
Level 0/Foundation level						
Other <i>specify below</i>						

Specify other partners: _____

Specify other programmes: _____

1.3 How many students (full time equivalents FTEs) do you have on collaborative programmes running (i.e. with enrolled students) in academic year 2003/04 (October 1st 2003 to September 30th 2004)? (Please tick the appropriate boxes)

	Estimated number of full time equivalent (FTEs) students				
	≤ 10 FTEs	11-25 FTEs	26-50 FTEs	51-100 FTEs	>100 FTEs
Honours Degree					
Foundation Degree					
Diploma of HE					
Certificate of HE					
Level 0/ Foundation level					
Other <u>(specify)</u>					

SECTION 2

This section explores the nature of the programme you work on, the nature of the collaborative partnership and the barriers and benefits that accrue from partnership work. If you do not work on a programme, please start this section at question 2.11.

2.0 The Collaborative Programme that you work on now (or the most recent one).

2.1 What is the title of the programme?

2.2 What is the level of the exit award for the programme? (please tick all that apply)

- (a) Honours Degree _____
- (b) Foundation Degree _____
- (c) Diploma of Higher Education _____
- (d) Certificate of Higher Education _____
- (e) Level 0/Foundation level _____
- (f) Other (please specify) _____

2.3 About your partners in this collaboration (*Please insert the number of partners in each case*)

- (a) Number of FE Colleges involved _____
- (b) Number of FHE Colleges involved _____
- (c) Number of HE Institutions involved _____
- (d) Number of public service employers involved _____
- (e) Number of private companies involved _____
- (f) Number of voluntary organisations involved _____
- (g) Other partners involved (*please specify*) _____

2.4 Which partner/partners initiated the collaboration?
(*please tick all that apply*)

- An HE partner _____
- A FE/FHE partner _____
- An Employer partner _____
- Other (*please specify*) _____
- Don't know _____

2.5 Which partner/partners led the collaboration? (*please tick all that apply*)

- An HE partner _____
- A FE/FHE partner _____
- An Employer partner _____
- Other (*please specify*) _____

2.6 What was (will be) the first academic year of recruitment to the programme?

_____ (*insert year eg 2003/04*)

2.7 What is your target total student number for academic year 2003/04 (October 1st 2003 to September 30th 2004)? (*Please fill in all that apply to the programme*)

- Full time students _____ (number) _____ (FTEs)
- Part time students _____ (number) _____ (FTEs)
- Don't know _____ (tick)

- 2.8 What proportion of the total programme is taught: *(Please insert the approximate percentage of the programme delivered in each place)*
- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| (a) In the Higher Education Institution | _____ | % |
| (b) In the FE/FHE College(s) | _____ | % |
| (c) In the workplace | _____ | % |
| (d) Other <i>(please specify)</i> | _____ | % |
| <hr style="width: 60%; margin: 0 auto;"/> TOTAL | _____ | 100% |
- 2.9 Was the development of this programme part of: *(Please tick, if appropriate)*
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| (a) Widening participation activity | _____ | Yes |
| (b) Workforce development activity | _____ | Yes |
- 2.10 What is the nature of the collaborative agreement between the partners for this programme? *(Tick all that apply)*
- | | | |
|--|-------|--|
| (a) There is a formal, written contract | _____ | |
| (b) There is a Memorandum of Agreement | _____ | |
| (c) There is a letter of intent/understanding | _____ | |
| (d) The development is part of an institutional strategic agreement with the partner | _____ | |
| (e) There is a verbal understanding | _____ | |
| (f) There is no explicitly stated agreement | _____ | |
| (g) Other <i>(please specify)</i> | _____ | |
| <hr style="width: 60%; margin: 0 auto;"/> | _____ | |
| (h) Don't know | _____ | |
- 2.11 Research has shown that there are a number of barriers to collaboration. *Please tick all that apply/have applied to your collaborative partnership.*
- | | | |
|--|-------|--|
| (a) Complexity of organisations | _____ | |
| (b) Differences in funding mechanisms | _____ | |
| (c) Differences in aims | _____ | |
| (d) Differences in organisational culture | _____ | |
| (e) Differences in management procedures | _____ | |
| (f) Lack of appropriate accommodation | _____ | |
| (g) Lack of resources | _____ | |
| (h) Differences in ideologies and values | _____ | |
| (i) Conflicting interests | _____ | |
| (j) Conflict over roles and responsibilities | _____ | |
| (k) Concern over control | _____ | |
| (l) Communication difficulties | _____ | |
| (m) Lack of organisation flexibility | _____ | |
| (n) Inability to deal with conflict | _____ | |
| (o) Others <i>(please specify)</i> | _____ | |
| <hr style="width: 60%; margin: 0 auto;"/> | _____ | |

2.12 From the above list in 2.11, please identify the three barriers which have been most problematical in your opinion. Place them in rank order with the most problematical first.

1st _____
2nd _____
3rd _____

2.13 In your opinion, what are the main benefits of collaborative curriculum development? Please continue on a separate sheet if you run out of space.

3.0 About you:

This section provides me with some information about you. Please note that no information will appear in the final report which can identify an individual and that the information is confidential.

3.1 What is your job title: _____

3.2 Which of the following employment categories bests fits your job: *(Please tick one category)*

- (a) Senior manager (strategic responsibility for institution) _____
- (b) Employer _____
- (c) Middle manager (responsible for managing a defined area) _____
- (d) Lecturer/Teacher _____
- (e) Administrator _____
- (f) Other *(please specify)* _____

3.3 Your gender:

Male _____ Female _____

3.4 The name of your institution/company: _____

APPENDIX 5 Interview Log

Pseudonym	ID No.	Consent sent	Consent received	Interviewed	Q'naire issued	Q'naire remind	Q'naire returned	Transcript sent	Trans. Remind	Trans. agreed	Thankyou
Neil	SO1101	27-Nov-03	27-Nov-03	27-Nov-03	27-Nov-03		27-Nov-03	01-Dec-03		02-Dec-03	Y
Jane	SO1202	02-Dec-03	02-Dec-03	02-Dec-03	02-Dec-03		08-Dec-03	04-Dec-03		11-Dec-03	Y
Kate	SO1103	28-Nov-03	28-Nov-03	28-Nov-03	28-Nov-03		10/12/2003	28-Nov-03		10-Dec-03	Y
Simon	SO0104	20-Jan-04	28-Jan-04	28-Jan-04	28-Jan-04		09-Feb-04	03-Feb-04		09-Feb-04	Y
Paula	SO0205	20-Jan-04	05-Feb-04	05-Feb-04	05-Feb-04		05-Feb-04	09-Feb-04	23-Feb-04	31-Mar-04	Y
Martin	SO0206	20-Jan-04	25-Feb-04	25-Feb-04	25-Feb-04		27-Feb-04	25-Feb-04		12-Mar-04	Y
Ernest	SO0207	13-Feb-04	27-Feb-04	27-Feb-04	27-Feb-04	21-Apr-04	24-May-04	27-Feb-04	21-Apr-04	24-May-04	Y
Patsy	SO0308	23-Feb-04	05-Mar-04	05-Mar-04	05-Mar-04		08-Mar-04	10-Mar-04		24-Mar-04	Y
Michael	SO0409	23-Feb-04	01-Mar-04	02-Apr-04	02-Apr-04		10-Apr-04	27-Apr-04		30-Apr-04	Y
Richard	SO0310	23-Feb-04	05-Mar-04	11-Mar-04	11-Mar-04	21-Apr-04	11-May-04	15-Mar-04		22-Mar-04	Y
Tania	SO0311	23-Feb-04	27-Feb-04	12-Mar-04	12-Mar-04		31-Mar-04	24-Mar-04		31-Mar-04	Y
Ashley	SO0312	23-Feb-04	18-Mar-04	18-Mar-04	18-Mar-04		18-Mar-04	24-Mar-04		04-Mar-04	Y
Jackie	SO0513	30-Mar-04	14-Jun-04	14-Jun-04	14-Jun-04		18-Jun-04	20-Jun-04		07-Jul-04	Y
Max	SO0515	30-Mar-04	07-May-04	07-May-04	07-May-04		07-May-04	28-May-04		08-Jun-04	Y
Dean	SO0416	30-Mar-04	22-Apr-04	22-Apr-04	22-Apr-04	14-Jun-04	18-Jun-04	29/04/2004		30/04/2004	Y
Tim	SO0617	30-Mar-04	08-Jun-04	08-Jun-04	14-Jun-04	05-Jul-04	19-Jul-04	05-Jul-04		19-Jul-04	Y
Fiona	OX0401	02-Apr-04	23-Apr-04	23-Apr-04	23-Apr-04		30-Jun-04	06/05/2004		12-Jun-04	email
Lesley	OX0502	27-Apr-04	13-May-04	13-May-04	n/a		n/a	08-Jun-04		21-Jun-04	Y
Henry	OX0503	27-Apr-04	02-Jul-04	02-Jul-04	02-Jul-04		12-Oct-04	21-Sep-04		28-Sep-04	Y
Nigel	OX0504	27-Apr-04	21-May-04	21-May-04	21-May-04			08-Jun-04		29-Jun-04	Y
Matt	OX0505	27-Apr-04	21-May-04	21-May-04	21-May-04		01-Jun-04	06-Jun-04		20-Jun-04	Y
Eva	OX0906	06-Sep-04	20-Sep-04	20-Sep-04	20-Sep-04		27-Sep-04	01-Nov-04		08-Nov-04	Y
Pat	OX0907	06-Sep-04	04-Oct-04	20-Sep-04	20-Sep-04		11-Oct-04	03-Nov-04		12-Nov-04	Y
Mark	OX0908	13-Sep-04	21-Sep-04	21-Sep-04	21-Sep-04		27-Sep-04	08-Nov-04		29-Nov-04	Y
Mitchell	OX0109	24-Jan-05	27-Jan-05	27-Jan-05	27-Jan-05			08-Feb-05		18-Feb-05	Y
Carmen	OX0110	24-Jan-05	27-Jan-05	27-Jan-05	27-Jan-05		08-Feb-05	08-Feb-05		15-Feb-05	Y
Jack	CC0501	06-May-04	22-Jul-04		22-Jul-04			20-Oct-04		27-Oct-04	email

Pseudonym	ID No.	Consent sent	Consent received	Interviewed	Q'naire issued	Q'naire remind	Q'naire returned	Transcript sent	Trans. Remind	Trans. agreed	Thankyou
Carol	CC0502	06-May-04	30-Jun-04	30-Jun-04	30-Jun-04		08-Feb-05	02-Aug-04		06-Sep-04	Y
Colin	CC0503	06-May-04	30-Jun-04	30-Jun-04	30-Jun-04			05-Aug-04		12-Aug-04	Y
Hilary	CC0704	22-Jul-04	22-Jul-04	22-Jul-04	22-Jul-04		08-Aug-04	14-Oct-04		21-Oct-04	Y
Carla	CC0705	20-Jul-04	22-Jul-04	22-Jul-04	22-Jul-04		27-Sep-04	26-Oct-04		02-Nov-04	Y
Travis	CC0906	01-Sep-04	07-Sep-04	10-Sep-04	10-Sep-04		27-Sep-04	04-Nov-04		19-Nov-04	Y
Sarah	CC0907	01-Sep-04	13-Sep-04	13-Sep-04	13-Sep-04		27-Sep-04	08-Oct-04		17-Oct-04	Y
Lucy	CC0908	01-Sep-04	11-Nov-04	11-Nov-04	11-Nov-04		22-Nov-04	16-Nov-04		24-Nov-04	Y

High level coding:

Nodes

- Recently Used
- Free (32)
- Trees (109)
 - partners
 - barriers
 - overcoming barriers
 - benefits
 - Search Results
- Cases (0)
- Sets (2)

All Trees

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
partners	1	8	16/12/20...	18/04/20...
barriers	2	10	16/12/20...	25/11/20...
overcoming barriers	3	2	16/12/20...	24/11/20...
benefits	4	2	17/12/20...	17/11/20...
Search Results	5	0	06/01/20...	06/01/20...

Trees

Coding for 'Partners'

Node Explorer - Collaborative Curriculum Development

Node Set Tools View

Browse Properties Attributes DocLinks NodeLinks Edit Set Assay Search

Nodes Nodes in /partners

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
employers	1	163	16/12/20...	18/04/20...
FE Colleges	2	132	16/12/20...	26/06/20...
Professional bodies	3	12	16/12/20...	07/01/20...
Higher Education	4	166	16/12/20...	18/04/20...
special needs	5	1	17/12/20...	18/04/20...
voluntary organisati...	6	4	19/12/20...	18/04/20...
student	7	112	18/11/20...	18/04/20...

Documents coded: 4 Children: 7
(no description)

Tree Node - (1) /partners

Coding for 'Barriers'

The screenshot shows the Node Explorer interface. The left sidebar contains a tree view with the following nodes: Recently Used, Free (32), Trees (109), partners, barriers, overcoming barri, benefits, Search Results, Cases (0), and Sets (2). The main area is titled 'Nodes in /barriers' and displays a list of 32 nodes, each preceded by a small icon. The nodes are arranged in three columns:

lack of expertise	research agenda	articulation of aims
lack of trust	limited student numbers	difficult work
finance	resistance to change	changes of policy
time constraints	institutional culture	change of personnel
lack of knowledge	institutional change	staff shortages
unequal power	lack of instituional support	equity of provision
different priorities	gatekeepers of knowledge	amount of student support
QA procedures	faulty partnership	student experience
lack of responsiveness	weak leadership	IPR
HE ivory tower	size of partnership	competition
difficult individuals	difficult to control and manage	
vested interests	lack of understanding	
prejudice and stereotypes	poor communication	
resources	lack of employer support	
management	overloaded individuals	
flavour of the day	vulnerable future	

Coding for 'Overcoming Barriers'

The screenshot shows the Node Explorer interface for 'Collaborative Curriculum Development'. The main window is titled 'Node Explorer - Collaborative Curriculum Development'. The menu bar includes 'Node', 'Set', 'Tools', and 'View'. The toolbar contains icons for 'Browse', 'Properties', 'Attributes', 'DocLinks', 'NodeLinks', 'Edit Set', 'Assay', and 'Search'. The interface is divided into two main panes. The left pane, titled 'Nodes', shows a tree structure with categories: 'Recently Used', 'Free (32)', 'Trees (109)', 'partners', 'barriers', 'overcoming barriers' (highlighted), 'benefits', 'Search Results', 'Cases (0)', and 'Sets (2)'. The right pane, titled 'Nodes in /overcoming barriers', displays a list of 22 nodes, each with a small icon and a text label. At the bottom of the interface, there is a status bar showing 'Documents coded: 1 Children: 22' and '(no description)'. The bottom-most status bar indicates 'Tree Node - (3) /overcoming barriers'.

Nodes in /overcoming barriers	
trust	strong management
experience	Memorandum of Agreement
senior management involvement	communication
leadership	inst commitment
evaluate success	budgeting time
quality	win win
viability	outreach
getting the right team	mutual understanding
commitment to aims	student support
partnership involvement	staff development
clarity of purpose	flexibility

Coding for 'Benefits'

The screenshot shows the Node Explorer interface. The left pane displays a tree view of nodes, with 'benefits' selected. The right pane shows a list of nodes under the path '/benefits'.

Node Explorer

Node Set Tools View

Browse Properties Attributes DocLinks NodeLinks Edit Set Assay Search

Nodes

- Recently Used
- Free (32)
- Trees (109)
 - partners
 - barriers
 - overcoming barriers
 - benefits**
 - Search Results
- Cases (0)
- Sets (2)

Nodes in /benefits

- delivering policy
- resources
- recruitment
- research opportunities
- enhanced reputation
- widening participation
- staff development
- enhanced motivation
- providing opportunities for students
- tackle elitism
- enhanced PR
- workforce development
- think global, act local
- self preservation
- diversification
- widens curriculum offer
- financial gain
- recruitment and retention
- progression
- pedagogical development
- partnership working
- personal satisfaction
- responsive students
- career development
- personal development
- qualification
- increased confidence
- access to expertise
- increased understanding
- tackles conservatism
- regional development

Free Nodes

The screenshot shows the 'Node Explorer - Collaborative Curriculum Development' application window. The interface includes a menu bar with 'Node', 'Set', 'Tools', and 'View'. Below the menu is a toolbar with icons for 'Browse', 'Properties', 'Attributes', 'DocLinks', 'NodeLinks', 'Edit Set', 'Assay', and 'Search'. The main area is divided into two panes: 'Nodes' on the left and 'Free Nodes' on the right. The 'Nodes' pane shows a tree view with categories like 'Recently Used', 'Free (32)', 'Trees (109)', and various node types such as 'partners', 'barriers', 'overcoming barriers', 'benefits', 'Search Results', 'Cases (0)', and 'Sets (2)'. The 'Free Nodes' pane displays a list of 32 individual nodes, each with a small globe icon. The status bar at the bottom left indicates 'Free'.

Free Nodes
aims of collaborative development
applied learning
Certificate of HE
development process
equality
External organisations
flexible delivery
foundation degrees
getting inside each others heads
government initiative
initiating collaboration
institutional support for collaborat
leading collaboration
market analysis
needs-led curriculum development
organic development
partnership
partnership contract
part-time programmes
professional engagement
programme directors
quality assurance
representation
Sector Skills Councils
senior management
strategic planning
strategy for partnership
validation
widening participation
widening participation unit
work based learning
workforce development

APPENDIX 7 Sample Transcript

Reference Number: CC0704

Pseudonym: Hilary

Ros (About the interviewee)

Um...well thanks very much Hilary for agreeing to be interviewed today. Um...could you just ...um... say who you are and who you work for and the role that you've got please?

Hilary

OK, er yes I'm, well you know, Hilary and ...um... I'm in the Department of Post-Compulsory Education and University College ...um... mainly, I've worked actually in two Departments. Um...I've also worked in the Department for Career and Personal Development which involved me working collaboratively there, with other partners, careers, companies, connexions services and so on. I'm reducing that work now to work mostly in post-compulsory education. How much would you like me to say about...

Ros

Well what's the role you have with this programme and what does it involve?

Hilary

The role, the role with this programme which sort of builds on the work that I've done in the past is that I teach on the Certificate programme. I teach, I think I have taught ...um... most units last year, certainly three quarters of the units. I've taught across the programme at the different stages. Um...I work now in two Colleges, SK College and Th College, ...um... where I'm also the Link Manager, which Jack has probably told you about that role. So I've got a sort of an administrative, liaison role, which I like, I think it's ...um... I think it's very important. Um...and that involves me in, I suppose, working more closely with the two respective Centre Managers, that's Jill and ...um... and Trevor and that work differently in different places, different ways that things are set up. So Jill I would meet with quite regularly here and we will go through how things are going on and the teaching and so on. Trevor I'll tend to see when I go over to teach or we would do it via email, and during the visits, but that's a bonus. Um...I don't know it's been, I don't know if you want me to say now about the year or actually any of the detail of that role.

Ros

Yes that would be helpful.

Hilary

I didn't know whether it was going to come up. So the sorts of things that I do, or we do together, are obvious things that you will be very familiar with,

like planning for the year's programme. So I've got these up here [point to papers on noticeboard], this is the SK one for next year and looking at where our input is going to be. Um...and also, er, not just the teaching but things like the induction. We are very aware about doing the induction programme for this year and as the Link Manager it was mostly my responsibility, together with Jack who is supportive and did some as well but to go on to see all the ten groups at SK and the four groups...um... in Th and to do the sort of: "this is University College's sort of, this is what the course is and that sort of thing". So really trying to ...um...build the link ...um... much more again with the College. So that's been my...I've felt very much, sort of, that I've been in the early stages, that I was going in there and it was building the relationship. There was plenty to build on so it wasn't cold calling at all, it was just trying to build it up. I've got a quiet voice, I don't know...

Ros

No, it's OK. I'll just turn it round. There.

Hilary

Um... so it was a very busy year last year because we had this new induction process, gone back to it, I suppose. So we started BlackBoard which I'm sure Jack has said and you know and all the, again, getting people trained, inducted into that and ...um...so there was a lot of stuff for me at the front to do with planning but also meeting students and tutors. Um...part of the job as well is to liaise with student reps and we hadn't got that built into the programme last year. It was something that was on a list that we had to do and then was done whereas this year we have got it into our thinking and onto our programme so that will be better. And then, ...um... when there were, if there were issues with particular students, for instance if there was a cause for concern ...um...Jill would talk to me about them, we would discuss them together. I'm trying to think of the kinds of issues that, that came up. We certainly had we had a cause for concern and ...um... things to do with procedures like CRB checks and, I mean, one of the things that I think is interesting is, is who, who is the responsible officer...what is the responsibility of each institution. For example, about CRB checks. I think we are much clearer now [cough] about that from University College point of view. Um...who is responsible for somebody who is doing their placement, if it is a placement, because the programme is for people who are employed. So there were, kind of, quite a lot of nitty gritty thinking things through, alongside Jack of course.

Ros (About the Collaborative Curriculum Development)

Um...how much of that is actually written down in either the Memorandum of Agreement or the Partnership document?

Hilary

Um...it is much clearer now, it's much clearer now and the handbook does some of that. Have you seen the Memorandums of Agreement?

Ros

No, I haven't. No.

Hilary

Um...a lot of work has gone into those by various people. In fact this year ...um... for various reasons, I actually did part of that with Centre Managers but I suppose like everybody, we have been working on the grey areas and trying to sort out things that we don't want to be too prescriptive. Like you were saying with your ethical procedures and, you know, the student voice and all those sorts of things, CRB checks, making those, I suppose have a clearer set of procedures and so the overlap between what is the role of personnel and ...um..., or human resources in the Colleges, and what's our role. I think we've moved on quite a lot this year. That's my feeling. I'm much happier.

But what was nice I suppose, what's been good is that we have actually been able to work on them together. That sounds very, very jolly but it hasn't felt confrontational, although we haven't always agreed. So there's been those kind of issues. Um...teaching, in terms of sorting out the teaching ...um...in one College, in Th, I did all the teaching so that was, or a high percentage of the teaching, so that was easy to do. But in SK, I couldn't, even if I'd wanted to, which I wouldn't have wanted to teach ten groups all at the same time really ...um... so there were three of us working there and so that involved, we wanted to plan what we were doing, so we sat down...it's gone. We were doing unit plans. We were doing a unit in the first year on assessment and a unit in the second year on assessment, at stage two and stage three. So three of us spent quite a bit of time. One was a new colleague as well. And that was quite useful because we felt we wanted to ...um...to plan, to sort of clarify where we all were with the subject matter, share resources, but also acknowledge that we would be doing it differently. That there were, so we were University College...three University College tutors overall but they wouldn't be getting literally, you know, the same lesson plan, and that was what we wanted to make clear to ourselves, you know, that we'd got the same framework but we had individual freedoms. We felt that that was very important. But also there is...um... [disturbance in the background] They are louder than me!

Ros

Never mind. Shall I pause it for a minute. [tape turned off until disturbance quietened]

Hilary

There is in one of the College's ...um... a slight tendency perhaps for the students to say they want things to be exactly the same in a very literal kind of sense and I don't know if that's your experience of places elsewhere? And yes we want the quality of experience and what they get to be the same but we didn't want to feel that we had to be clones of each other. And that was quite interesting actually because ...um... doing that work together was, was it was good. It wasn't curriculum development because we were just delivering it but we still had to do quite a bit of work around it and then when we'd finished the teaching, er, again the three of us got together and we reviewed ...um... I've forgotten what I did now but I just did a sheet about, for each of us you know, what we did, what worked well, what were the difficulties and what were the realities, you know, just a little analysis and it was very good to actually get that ...um... out and what we did, because we were then all working with different tutors ...um... certainly in that College, in SK ...um... and it meant that it brought, not responsibility but the contact with other colleagues back here. And that was nice and so it was kind of deepening as well as broadening the relationship with University College. Um... and so the things that have been, that had worked well and the things that had concerned us, we have been able to work on with our individual contacts as well as, you know, so we didn't have to have a big formal meeting. I have had a meeting with Jill, you know an end of term one saying where are we and where are we going, and actually the things that we found that we'd all been concerned about but we have been working on them over the last few months. So we weren't, we weren't sitting here, sort of saying oh...so I think that we have been working genuinely collaboratively in that sense. Um... and of course they've fed back to us...it's been very much a sort of a debate...not in a negative way but I suppose there has been a dialogue, that's on-going, but there are quite a few other tutors involved with Sharon. The other thing that, or another thing, for me, has been that I've been a mentor for teachers on the Cert Ed who have been doing the Associate Tutors' course...I don't know if Jack...

Ros

Jack's talked about that.

Hilary

He's talked about it.

Ros

The Associate Tutors' course.

Hilary

And so ...um... that has deepened my contact with ...um... a number of people and has been quite significant I think really. It's ...um... been a very complex role as well ...um... but ...um... [5 seconds]

Ros

Is there any conflict between your Link Tutor role and your mentoring role?

Hilary

Well that's why I was pausing because I was just thinking that I haven't found it totally comfortable sometimes ...um...I do now because the teaching's over and I'm ...um... just relating to people now as a mentor so kind of, getting that balance has been ...um...[4 seconds] yes because I was thinking, one of the things that I thought, which is terrible really, was well if I'm teaching one of my mentee's groups, I hope it's going to be a good job [laugh] so there was that sort of feeling, slight feeling of being set up, not set up, but feeling that I, perhaps I was setting myself up and it was just a little layer in the whole thing that I would quite liked to have not had.

Ros

Additional pressure?

Hilary

Yes. I would have liked to have taught people's classes that I wasn't a mentor for really. But that said, having been said and kind of trying to work out the, you know, that relationship, I think I'm, on balance it has been good. I would still have preferred not to have taught...I didn't with one person, I didn't teach their class and that was better. But there's no doubt... that got me so that I was sitting in there, and doing the teaching, and sitting doing the planning projects with them and in some cases giving them ideas for reading or whatever and I think there was also a slight complication with being with the mentor and then assessing as well, which we are talking about. Um...

Ros

Well that's always a bit of a tension in higher education altogether.

Hilary

It is.

Ros

The teacher being the assessor as well.

Hilary

I know, yes, yes. So I suppose really I've taken the, you know, the assessment feedback, I think we all have really...you know because these are our colleagues. Um...alongside that we have the Associate Tutors' course has got a momentum, not quite of it's own, but about developing the community that we want to do and I'm sure that Jack has explained that there were four Saturday sessions which ...um... most of the mentors

attended as well as the mentees and that, and that was good and we've built on that ...um... in terms of thinking about research and we had a departmental seminar away-day on research and we invited the Associate Tutors to come and some did come to that event. And when we were talking about the place of research and what could people do, not in detail but just really wanting to build that idea that they were, we were, we were working together on those things but whilst recognising that, I suppose acknowledging, about the constraints within the sector which are with us as well, I don't think it's just FE, because we're very, we have been very tied into their terms anyway. Um...so a lot of things, to my mind, have grown this year, partly because I've been involved and I can see...and feel it much more. But I think if you had a graph, it's at saturation. I was very often aware, I was in the staff room in SK particularly an awful lot of the time. Sitting down talking to one person or another or going to see people, saying I've got this for you, a high level of contact is...high.

Ros

That was going to be one of my questions. How much time do you think you, of your total working time, do you actually give to this job?

Hilary

A lot. I don't know, I haven't quantified it. My diary was stolen in April so I can't go back and look.

Ros

Well officially, is it the whole of your job? Half of your job? or...um...

Hilary

I have a workload allocation for it but I can't remember what that is, I haven't got the figures because we've just done the planning. But it is recognised as a role ...um... it has, this year, partly because it is the first year and partly because of things like BlackBoard is new to everybody, so there is a kind of calming job to be done as well. I did a lot of fielding of people who couldn't log on. Right OK. And the odd little session myself to get people on. So there was that. And I don't think it's going to be like that this year and so it really just wiped out the first term.

Ros

So how long have you actually been working on this programme?

Hilary

Um...coming up for four years since September 2000.

Ros

September 2000. Why do you think University College has actually got involved in this type of work, this collaborative work?

Hilary

Um...I don't know the original philosophy ...um... historically, I mean this is where...I've been here for ...um... I've been here for ten years actually since '94, and I started off in secondary education, my background is in careers guidance and education, in-service training of teachers, school teachers. Um...and there's, the tradition has always been working, I say always, but has been in-service development and working with institutions and that developed as a, as a philosophy I think, and then of course we worked with the health service, I think. And maybe the nature of the institution and the geography and the nature of the courses that we run, very vocational, two thirds count as vocational education and ...um... there has always been a lot of input ...um... but people in the field who come in to do work. I think it probably comes back quite a way to, you know, the Vice Principal in the past, ...um... and then that's been picked up by various people. So I think it's a mixture of philosophy and pragmatism probably.

Um...I think that one of the things that is perhaps happening is ...um... [5 seconds] is, I won't call it centralising, but I think one of the things I suppose is one's trying to get the balance between all the partners and yet, as the HEI, we've got the eventual responsibilities for quality and there's no doubt that that has made a real difference to perhaps, I suppose I'm only talking about the last four years, but the way that I see it and also thinking about the careers programmes that I have been running on a collaborative basis. You know there was a time, if I think about careers, when we were listening to the stakeholder, the view of the stakeholders was the main thing and then we had the flexibility and we could put on courses and now we can't do that in the same kind of way. So now I think it is tighter and a more complex way of working and where we are more, had to be more assertive because of that whole standards. That's not quite what you asked.

Ros

No, no. So in a sense it has become a little bit more hierarchical?

Hilary

I'm not sure about that. I think, I know what you're saying, I think, if it's hierarchical because we've got more that we have to implement and we have to see, so it's got to be the same student experience, it's got to be ...have the same assignments, exactly. I mean actually getting those kind of things in place, then it is more hierarchical but the way it works and Jack's probably talked about it is ...um... it is involving. It does involve the Colleges so we have a day, I don't know if it was last week or the week before I've forgotten, where the Centre Managers and other people ...um... came here and we are all sat round and we went through all the assignments that everybody had a say in. What we can't do, of course, is change the validated units in terms of content and modify those but they are involved so it's not a

question of things being sent out. This is the new thing, will you do it? I think that there are just more requirements that just have to be demonstrated that they're met really. So I suppose, yeh, perhaps it is. Um...but it still feels to me like a very, kind of, negotiated position as well. Um...[5 seconds] yes.

Ros (Barriers to Collaborative Curriculum Development)

If we can go on to look at some of the ...um... difficulties. You have alluded to a few there already. Um...but, er, the literature often talks about barriers to collaborative working or the difficulties of collaborative working. Um...from your experience in this programme, I mean what would you see the main difficulties as being?

Hilary

Um...I think ...um... the sort of FE timetable has been, and coming from that the sort of ...um... their economic framework so, [4 seconds] I don't know, this is quite sensitive. Um...I don't know how to put it, but I think ...um... the fact that FE terms are so long and quite often, so you know I was teaching on Maundy Thursday evening and there's nothing wrong with that at all except that there was nobody else there and, er, I think that the demands there, I don't think people are free, I think that's it really, I don't think people in FE are free. Um... because of the financial and structural funding arrangements, I suppose. Um...so I think it's quite difficult to do FE and HE, so that's been, the sort of demands of their timetable in one institution in particular no so much in the other.

Ros

So the barrier, the difficulty there is for them to engage in the, sort of, HE scholarship really in the same way as an HE...

Hilary

Yes...and also by the nature of their timetable. We're teaching according to their timetable and so we're also drawn into their ...um... their structure. We wouldn't be in the same way this year because we've learnt about it ...um... in a different kind of way I feel ...um... and we have had these ...um... sessions on research and we've got a research conference coming up in ...um... November, and you know, so the idea is there but colleagues in FE and us to an extent, you know if the teaching is there it has to be, you know, so many hours and so on, and I think that it then makes it very difficult, so people get very enthusiastic ...um... but then quite burnt out. So we're working on that, the whole timetable and the demands of hours, as Jack has said I'm sure, at least trying to get HE conditions, more HE conditions for FE colleagues.

Ros

The danger then there is that ...um... those that are teaching on the HE programme are seen to be favoured more than those on the FE contracts. Are there any internal difficulties do you think?

Hilary

Yes there are and people say that they feel uncomfortable because of their colleagues still teaching on another kind of programme, an FE programme where their conditions are different and they feel uncomfortable about that. So, yes, they do talk about it. They do talk quite a lot and the level contact, the level of the quality of the relationships, I feel have changed. I feel in a totally different position now than I did a year ago, because I know these people now, they are my colleagues. I don't feel I'm going in from outside ...um...at all.

Ros

So that's one area of this, sort of timetabling and conditions of service and so on that are a difficulty, what ...are there others?

Hilary

Time has been a problem this year because I don't think we've, you know, quite cracked it, also because it was new and I was new to do doing it and there was all that getting up to speed. Because when you know something you know what you've got to do and you get on and do it. Um...

Ros

What about the ...um...sort of resource, resourcing of it. Have there been any difficulties, for instance, in ...um... putting into place BlackBoard or...

Hilary

Well I think BlackBoard was personally quite hard for me because ...um... [5 seconds] because I was trained on it so that I could use it but actually getting a whole class of students on it. There were problems with students not being registered in time so they couldn't get on and so that was, that was a major thing, for me. I think, part of it was having multiple groups and then people being quite despondent about BlackBoard and saying it was a waste of time. So BlackBoard was...um... something to be worked upon. I think it's different this year again. It's not just because it's the end of the year [laughter]. But anyway, no, that was a problem. People being registered so administrative and IT issues that made it harder and ...um... but I felt that it was my job to ...um... you know, to try to make it work and to find out who could do it, who should do it, what was possible to do. Um...and one of the things now, I've got this laptop and one of the things that I will do ...um... I would have done last year if I had been up to speed and I wasn't, but now I've got my laptop, is that you can actually use those in the classroom so in a break or something you can actually have a student around and get them

going. So yes there were a lot of things. Also we had an inspection ...um... and review.

Ros

That was at University College or within the Colleges?

Hilary

Um...it was University College but it involved collaborative...

Ros

The QAA?

Hilary

Yes, it was a review. And ...um... I wouldn't say that was a problem ...um... but it was just something to prepare for and assemble and show what we were doing. But we have been inclined to do things that the External Examiner had, one of our External Examiners had recommended, which was, in the partners colleges to get some buddy mentoring and to get people to go from one College to watch some-one in another College and to give feedback and some of that did happen. Um...as well as the Associate Tutor Mentoring. But there was the doing it and getting the paperwork and there was putting it all together for people to see what benefits there were. The evidence. So there was quite a lot of preparation assembling stuff.

Ros

Are the two different quality regimes, you know, the FE and the HE one, a difficulty in any way?

Hilary

I think it, I mean in one of the Colleges, er, actually had an inspection in March, I can't...I think it was just after ours. So we had ours and they were great, you know, the thing just flowed. It reminds me of...it's one of those things to bring in, the goods. And theirs followed straight after which we supported to an... you know what they needed from us. Um...I don't think it is a problem to us, I don't know if it is a problem to them. They don't say it is and we try to line it up as much as possible but it could be. I don't think it is to us. Um...I thought of something else. I've forgotten it again now. Oh yes, this was just a personal issue for me, which was a problem and in which I ended up doing more of the teaching than I thought. It meant that I was teaching quite heavily. Literally teaching and then all the assessment so that was just a timetabling thing but it did slightly then cut into what I was wanting to do on this work. Um...but I think, I think there's quite a lot of goodwill, a lot of delicate things but a lot of goodwill, generally.

Ros

Any more? Any other barriers or have they...is that largely covered?

Hilary

I think that probably does. Culture, time, teaching...I can't think of anything else at the moment.

Ros

OK. Well they can't be that big then if you can't think of any.

Hilary

No

Ros (Organisational Structure)

No that's fine. In terms of the organisational structure, I mean how does that work? There's a programme management board presumably, is there, for the programme? Are you on that?

Hilary

Yeh. Um...the way ...um... the way the course works in terms of organisation is that ...um... there are so many, you know, x amount of meetings which, with Centre Managers and us and I've forgotten how many we have but they're programmed and there are development days and that's a lot elsewhere. Jack will come along and say this is the latest Ofsted discussion or background or finding. Um...and we will want people then to respond or to bring issues but they will be focused and that's the way it runs really I think. Although Jack does a lot himself, you know, he holds it quite firmly ...um... which I think is important. I think people appreciate that. I think there has probably been tension in the past about ownership and I think that is a delicate area and when it is within curriculum development, it is. But I'm sure that Jack is going round, he's going round colleges and trying to talk at the level of the hierarchy and I only have to deal with the Centre Managers which is good.

Ros

Where does the intellectual property lie? With the University College?

Hilary

I think so yes but again I think that it's one of those things that is becoming clearer and I think perhaps with certain individuals who aren't dealing with aren't working with the programme or aren't involved with it at all, I think it may be an issue.

Ros

You mentioned that there is a Memorandum of Agreement for the programme ...um... has that been a sort of evolutionary thing or were a lot of these things actually laid down right at the start?

Hilary

I don't know right at the start. I imagine there must have been something but I don't know. I mean, I know that for the past few years for all our programmes there have been Memorandum of Agreements ...um... and which have changed because we now have a central function with somebody whose, I think you should probably know, and Jack probably told you, who is Head of Collaborative Provision.

Ros

Is this Colin? I've spoken to him already.

Hilary

You have? Yes. So he's developing all of that but before him it was Fred Jones who was...but I don't know the history of all that. [6 seconds] No I'm not sure. We've always had something, thinking back to when I was working with Schools and we did a lot of collaborative provision with Schools, MA programmes, you know, and Certificates, and school-based work, action research things. Um...and there was always something and this is going back ever since I've been here, there would always be something, some documentation. We would have then, something like a project approval piece of paper or set of papers and you would have to get the School in that case to agree. So I guess there would have been something.

Ros

Yes these things have tended to become more sophisticated as these things have grown.

Hilary

Yes. Yes I don't know whether that has happened with yours. Yes.

Ros

Well is there any issue over the ...um... the sort of numbers allocation and things of that sort? Because presumably that's done from here.

Hilary

People wanting to have more, more students?

Ros

Yes because basically the colleges even though they are in a collaboration still would act competitively since Incorporation.

Hilary

Yes. I wouldn't say so especially. There's a fine balance between what they could actually staff and deliver and what they've got. I don't know how...I think that's probably developed over the years. Um...I haven't come across very much from colleges saying they must have 200. Because if they're

saying something like that, they're also saying but, you know, we don't...we're not going to be able to staff it ourselves. So it's kind of reasonably in equilibrium. That's my take on it certainly, with the colleges I work with. I tend to send that kind of thing through to Jack. That's the other thing of course, that I found last year, I was going to Jack quite a lot saying this has happened or that's happened. Can't think, what do you think? You know, working together, which was nice. Um...so no, not hugely, but I think, I think there might be...and of course what we were trying to do with the buddy mentoring was to get, I suppose it's difficult isn't it to cut across the kind of competitiveness, but we tried to. It took me back to...I used to work with TVEI [laugh] all that collaborative stuff with schools and colleges then. That was before 1988, so I don't know, I don't think it's an issue. I think there might be in an anecdotal kind of way, some kind of...oh that's how they do it? That's different from ours, you know.

Ros

So there's a certain amount of comparison is there?

Hilary

There's comparison, people compare with each other but I mean one of the things that I've found it's a delicate balance and it used to be like this when I was dealing with in-service work with careers companies because when they became privatised, I'd never go somewhere without: In Hereford and Worcester they've got this, this is what they're doing...

But I've always been aware of that kind of thing. It's a delicate role partly from the sort of ...um... just competitiveness and setting up the role.

Ros

It is quite a tension isn't it because in FE there was the time when, straight after Incorporation, when things were very competitive.

Hilary

Yes.

Ros

And now the government, the flavour of the day, is working in collaboration and cooperation...

Hilary

...collaboration, yes...

Ros

...shared facilities and all of those sorts of things and it's not an easy change of mind set is it?

Hilary

It isn't, no it isn't but again that's why it's quite nice to have things like Associate Tutors' course and a bit more mingling about. I don't think people do mingle much but that's what we would all like. Um... yes, I think that is quite hard yes. So I think it is probably quite nice to be...we do forma neutral place for them, although of course we're in competition as well, we could be. Well we are running an Advanced Certificate, a Cert Ed on Adult Education. That's what that chap came in for earlier, for an interview. Yes it is quite, it is quite delicate.

Ros (Benefits of Collaborative Curriculum Development)

If we can move onto the final section, in terms of the benefits.

Hilary

Yes I was just looking at the time for you.

Ros

This is short section. The benefits of collaboration, off collaborative curriculum work. What do you see the benefits to University College of this sort of work has been?

Hilary

Um... I think one of the main benefits is to ...um... is that it is easier to develop things together and this is true, when we are actually working alongside. So the things that I'd say, if, if we hadn't had that level of involvement and the three of us who are the University College team weren't there, some of the things that came up or we're discussing, if the only way was to come back and working on those issues and dealing with them from a meeting, they'd be quite sensitive and quite difficult but because we'd got a reasonable relationship and because the other two then were working, so it was shared, yes there were still the same delicate things to be sorted out or to be dealt with but they were things that could be talked about. We didn't have to be confrontational about it. Not that we're confrontational anyway but it's more organic, if I can use that word. It comes out of things more naturally. So for instance, yeh, kind of being there, so I went down for a day and had a days marking, moderating, marking in the College. Well I did it in both Colleges as well. But at SK there was quite a lot, there were quite a lot of tutors there as well and they were all crossing over each others work and that was nice because it was formal occasion, in the sense that we were moderating and there was a lot to it, but it was also nice because it was quite informal and it was a way of talking about assessment. And rather than having a big fancy University College session on assessment, just to talk about what we were doing as we were doing it, was great.

Ros

The issues grew out of what you were doing?

Hilary

Yes, yes so then now I can say, and Oh now we've got this useful thing, I find it useful to think about when I'm starting a unit, do you want to have a look at that. Rather than saying here is something from University College and you will use it. It just more sort of, Oh that's an interesting idea. So I think one of the Associate Tutors said how much she had learnt from the feedback, that Alan had given to one of her students when he was doing something on assessment. So that to me is the big advantage, is that it is more organic, it makes it easier because I'm not naturally a teller. This is what you have to do. I don't work like that. I can't work like that. I don't think people like it anyway and also to pick up, the other thing, is to pick up issues rather before that they blow. You know people say, there's this, and it's better to know early [laughter] I think those are the main things; dealing with things at, or meeting things at an early stage in a friendly environment, I suppose.

Ros

What about for the students? What sort of advantages of this kind of programme is there for them?

Hilary

That it's collaborative?

Ros

Yes.

Hilary

Um...well it's very interesting really because I had a number of sessions with quite a lot of student representatives and I was asking them about a lot of things, but how things could be improved and it was very interesting the number who would have liked more contact with University College or liked University College, they like...some of them said they would have liked a ceremony, they would have liked to come to University College. Others would have hated the thought of it and so on, but they did...and that is one of the things we have wanted to do of course is to make the University College link stronger, but they did say that. And I've had feedback from ...um... the Centre Managers that the students do know who I am to an extent and that there is somebody else from University College. Then, of course, they have the tutors that teach them, which is good, but the centres have, sort of promoted me as the College now. We've tried to that and I think we can build on that. Particularly as I'll be going back there, for some of them anyway, yeh. But you said the advantages, I think it is sometimes a shock to some of them that they're doing an HE course. They hadn't expected, even though they know, they keep...it's not foremost in their minds that they're doing a higher education course. For some it does click with them and they can be frightened too but for others it's got that nice,

liberating feel to it. And then there is the whole issue of standards and you know, them understanding the HE levels and HE standards but I think in terms of the things like ...um... professional confidence, that helps. So in terms of being in a partnership, I think it needs, you know, the tutors to be given some...you know, University College isn't the big bad wolf, sometimes there's a lot to do and they are our colleagues. So I think as I say, for the students it's identifying again that they are doing an HE course and actually that's good for them if they haven't had much experience of it. Other things but, I think they're slower to take off are things like having an Athens account and access. Because, as you know, the tensions of doing a course like this [turn tape over] is access.

Ros

Do you feel that you've gained anything from working in this sort of way?

Hilary

Mm. Oh I do, yeh. I do because I work, I work best in a context. I don't like going in as somebody from outside and having to carry my...I'm used to it from where I worked before...but you know how it is when you have to go and teach somewhere and you have to carry your environment with you and I feel that that has changed. At Th where I've worked probably for about four years now I think, so I feel that the classroom that they use is, it is my environment and in SK that is becoming the case.

Ros

So you feel that you belong?

Hilary

Exactly. So the secretary and, I did know the caretaker but he's just resigned...not resigned...retired and things like that. So the advantages to me are that I really feel in there so in terms of my own teaching and liaison it's much easier because there isn't that level of, you know, having to really be in a different place. And also, you know, just ...um...finding out what other people are teaching and coaching. You know it's still interesting and it keeps me up-to-date and I do things sometimes ...um... if I get there early I go to the coffee bar and have a coffee because I travel to Th, and I do try to go and have coffee. So I'm kind of rubbing up against people who are in, not the restaurant...what's it called?

Ros

The refectory?

Hilary

The refectory, yeh, so it's little things like that and... the resource centre and it's very funny for me, not funny, it's just interesting because years ago in the careers service I had a, a similar kind of role but with careers advisers and

schools and I remember that same kind of feeling of actually being able to walk around and around a school almost as if it was your own place and you were not an outsider and I think that's got great spin offs for, certainly for me personally, actually.

Ros

OK I've come to the end of the questions that I want to ask you, is there anything else that strikes you that we haven't had an opportunity to talk about?

Hilary

Um...I don't think so. I think I have talked quite a lot I think. I think I feel quite positive about it and that's probably come across. Um...I feel positive about next year I think, because what has come out of this year. I think we have a structure that will help us deal with it and experience of moving on together.

Ros

It's sort of bedded down a bit more?

Hilary

Yes because there were too many things new: new mentors, I was new, BlackBoard was new, we'd got an inspection, I had to do teaching I hadn't done before. You know there were just a lot of things in the pot. No I don't think there is anything else really. Perhaps when I see that...

Ros

...something might crop up. Well thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me. That's been really helpful.

Hilary

No it's a pleasure.

APPENDIX 8 Benefits Model Terminology

Intrinsic Benefits Benefits which originate within the organisation.
Extrinsic Benefits Benefits that come from the external environment.

Mission benefits Benefits which relate to the mission of the organisation to provide either higher education, further education or employer services.
Developmental benefits Benefits which have a developmental or change management aspect for the organisation itself or the people that work within it.
Business benefits Benefits which relate to the sustainability of the business of the organisation (HEI, FEC or Employer).

MISSION BENEFITS

BENEFIT	
Research	Providing opportunities for research activity for staff.
Providing opportunities for students	Providing opportunities for students to follow undergraduate courses at a location that is most appropriate and in a mode that is most appropriate.
Progression	Providing opportunities for students to progress from L3FE programmes onto L4 HE programmes and then on to further HE study or professional qualification.
Better links with students	Closer links between students and staff especially during delivery in FEC.
Delivering Government Policy	Organisations providing education and training opportunities in line with major government policies or anticipating major government policies.
Prestige and Reputation	Organisation gaining additional prestige or an enhanced reputation through association with the partnership.
WP/Social Inclusion	Organisation/individual engaged in partnership working in order to provide opportunities to study at HE level for under-represented groups.
Delivery close to need	Delivery takes place closer to the student either in the FEC or in the work-place. Increased flexibility for learning.

DEVELOPMENTAL BENEFITS

BENEFIT	
Staff Development	Collaborative curriculum development provides an opportunity for staff to develop their knowledge, understanding or skills.
Enhanced motivation	Collaborative curriculum development provides a mode of working that increases staff and/or student motivation.
Increased understanding	Understanding of the situation, curriculum or external frameworks of reference are improved through working collaboratively.

	Opportunity to share knowledge and gain direct experience of other points of view. Enhances internal practice.
Tackle elitism	Collaborative curriculum development provides an opportunity for the organisation and individuals to gain a wider perspective.
Workforce development	Collaboration provides a method of instigating change within the workforce involved in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills or attitudes.
Tackle conservatism	Collaborative curriculum development provides an organisation or individual with an opportunity to change.
Working with responsive Students	Collaborative work provides an opportunity for staff to work with students who want to learn and are responsive to study.
Pedagogical development	Provides opportunities for partners to review their teaching and learning strategies, to learn from each other and to try out new methods.
Personal satisfaction	Individuals find working collaboratively provides them with a heightened sense of personal satisfaction.
Personal development	Individuals find working collaboratively provides them with development opportunities which wouldn't have been easily available otherwise.
Increased confidence	Individuals (staff or students) experience increased confidence through being involved with collaborative working and/or new curricula.
Work-based learning opportunities	Collaborative working allows for WBL to be built into the curriculum and provides students with opportunities to gain credit for their experiential learning.
Partnership working	Partnership provides benefits to individuals and organisations in terms of breadth of network.
Accreditation and Qualifications	Qualifications and accreditation provides individual staff and students with recognizable increase in market value.
Professionalisation	Individuals gain from professionalisation of their work – intermediate roles given professional status through contact with HEI and transferable qualifications.
Career Enhancement	Staff and students gain career enhancement through work with the consortium providing opportunities to move jobs and progress through promotion.
Improved QA	Possibilities for sharing good practice in QA and QE across sectors.
Learning from each other about change management	Different organisations tackle change management in different ways. Partnership provides the opportunity to learn from other experiences.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

BENEFIT	
Recruitment of students	New curriculum and modes of delivery provide an increase in student numbers and/or a difference profile of students related to WP.
Self preservation	Collaboration provides opportunities which might increase the survival potential of the organisation, department or individual.
Widen curriculum offer	Collaboration provides opportunities for HEIs and FECs to widen their curriculum offer and therefore provide more opportunities for students and staff – good for marketing.
Financial gain	Organisation gains financially in some way from the collaborative

	development.
Staff recruitment and retention	Collaborative working assists in recruiting of staff and the retention of new staff in the organisation.
Access to resources	Organisation or individual has access to resources that would otherwise not be available to them.
Enhanced PR	Organisation gains from enhanced public relations due to involvement in the partnership and the collaborative development.
Think global, act local	Collaborative development enables the organisation to satisfy some larger, overarching aim.
Access to expertise	Organisation or individual is able to access expertise not otherwise available to them.
Regional development	Organisation is able to take a larger and more prominent role in regional activity.
Market-led economy	Organisation is more able to respond to the needs of the economy by working collaboratively with others.
Networking across institutions	Working in collaboration expands the business network of each institution.
Better marketing	Increased external focus assists in the development of more effective marketing.

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