Development in universities: past, present and future (0123)

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In the UK there is now an extensive history of formally organised approaches to development. Nationally and locally the area is populated by development tribes and territories that frequently overlap. These include staff, educational, academic and organisational development (Blackmore and Castley, 2006, 15). However, the tribal nature of the field of development means that the story is rarely examined wholly. Blackmore et al offer a brief account of some key events, including the establishment of national agencies and associations in the development field, bodies which have to an extent contributed to the context for development within universities and that are also indicators of some of the development tribes and territories. A wide range of major funding initiatives are also noted (Blackmore et al, 2010). Many otherwise valuable accounts, for example of educational development generally (Land, 2003, 2004) and of its organisation in institutions (Gosling 1996, 2001, 2008) because of their tight focus do not always show a full picture. Yet there is value in taking a broader view, because it is not reasonable to assume that the ways in which development tribes and territories are currently constituted will remain unchanged. Indeed it might be argued that they are constantly, within limits, changing as institutions periodically reorganise their provision.

Broad policy for the university sector has shown some consistency in its framing and concerns in recent years that the recent change in government is unlikely to alter significantly - (Leitch (2006), Sainsbury, (2007), CBI (2009) and DIUS (2009). This is now overlain with current concerns to decrease the size of the public sector, including the likely transfer of some of the costs of higher education to the student. As pressures on institutions intensify, development communities are likely to experience two conflicting pressures of their own. Firstly they may be called upon to achieve more in the cause of strategic change and increased institutional productivity, in relation to a specific national agenda. Secondly, they may find themselves experiencing a considerable loss of resources. One consequence of this might well be a re-organisation of development provision within institutions. The situation is complicated by what might be seen as an absence of strong policy direction from government, for a time at least, in relation to development. It may be some time before government concern for *what* universities should be doing is supplemented with a focus on *how* they should be ensuring high quality in their activities. It is not at all clear what turn the story of development in universities might take, nor what the impact on existing development communities might be, but such rapid change in the external environment for universities suggests that the impact may be substantial.

Mark Twain observed that although history does not repeat itself, it does have a tendency to rhyme. A recent paper taking a retrospective overview of the Australian educational development has stressed the value of an historical perspective but has noted the danger that some significant aspects of the development "story" may disappear from the account as a result of current dominant discourses (Lee, Manathunga and Kandlbinder, 2010). Perhaps, at this time of uncertainty, we can learn from the past if we can develop a clear account of it that is sufficiently nuanced in social, cultural and political terms.

Previous work (Blackmore, 2009) has led to the proposal of a "ISIS" model of conceptions of development based on the dimensions of inclusion, strategy, integration

and scholarship. It has been suggested that these are highly significant areas in which institutional practice, as well as the beliefs, values and practices of developers and development communities show considerable variation. Previous work used the model to show that staff and educational development communities could be characterised rather differently, using the dimensions of the model.

A brief review of overlapping eras in development in UK institutions, noting key events, will be framed by reference to aspects of the external environment, including key drivers. In particular, the ISIS model will be employed to illuminate the varying ways in which development has been conceptualised, organised and enacted in universities, taking note of the affordances and constraints that are built into the model.

Finally, the current and likely future environment for universities will be considered in terms of major trends that are likely to have implications for the ways in which development is thought about and supported in universities. The ISIS model will be employed as a framework to characterise possible future directions in future policy and practice.

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