Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Funded, In-House Learning and Teaching Projects: a Report on a Research Project

With a Perspective from the Director of Academic Quality (Learning and Teaching)

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Summary
In the current quality enhancement climate that dates back to Dearing (NCIHE, 1997), many universities are encouraging their staff to research into their own teaching practice, to innovate and to disseminate new ideas, strategies and resources to their peers, and many provide funding to support such work. This article is in two parts. The first explores the University of Hertfordshire's (UH) use of in-house funds to support small-scale development projects that are designed to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. It reports research that sought to assess what 'value-added' effect such funded projects might have in terms of spread of use, longevity and impact. The second provides a perspective on this research from the Director of Academic Quality (Learning and Teaching).

The Context

In the global market of Higher Education many universities are concerned to enhance the quality of the learning and teaching experienced by their students. Along a continuum, some are at the forefront of interactive learning, be it face-to-face or e-learning (Laurillard and McAndrew, 2002), while some others are concerned largely with didactic face-to-face teaching or the mere posting of lecture notes on the Web. Wherever universities stand along this continuum, following the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997), teaching quality enhancement is to the fore. Given the current national emphasis on the quality of learning and teaching that takes place in Higher Education, and increasing funds given to universities in support of improving quality, it is not perhaps surprising that many[1] universities in England use at least part of those funds to support in-house developments and innovations in learning and teaching. UH has operated a Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF) for a number of years. Any staff within the University may apply for funds to develop new ideas, resources, strategies and methods related to learning and teaching, or to conduct some small-scale research intended to enhance learning and teaching.

The aim of the LTDF is to support projects that align closely with the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. The strategy outlines five key goals:

• The achievement of high levels of innovation and dissemination of good practice

• All teaching staff should seek to enhance learning and teaching

• StudyNet (a managed learning environment)

to become an integral part of learning and teaching activity for all University students

• Learning and teaching and student support methodologies will be developed in the context of the University's widening participation strategy and commitment to equal opportunities

• A greater emphasis will be placed on the development of transferable skills in order to enhance employability

There are also strategic objectives, such as evaluation of the impact of newly introduced learning and teaching practices and the role of teaching fellowships; the pedagogical development of StudyNet and dissemination of methodologies, best practice and exemplars; development of the functionality of StudyNet and its exploitation as a means of providing flexible learning opportunities and enhanced support for learners; work-based learning; Personal Development Planning; career-management skills; the explicit assessment of skills; ensuring equality of opportunity for disabled students and compliance, in teaching and learning, with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. In particular, the University supports projects that have the potential to achieve high levels of innovation, the dissemination of good practice and wider application. All LTDF proposals must identify how they will meet, in some way, the University's strategic objectives.

In September 2003 it was thought appropriate that a formal evaluation be made of projects that have been funded over recent years. Hence, funding was obtained for this 'project on projects'. The main aims of the 'project on projects' are to assess the impact, longevity and take-up of the individual funded

projects' outcomes, and to assess whether 'value' has been 'added'.

The Study

The database for Project Proposals and Project Reports that were funded between 1996 and 2003 is in the public domain and lists a total of 89 separate projects. Most were accessed electronically using the University's website although some of the early proposals could only be accessed by hard copy. All proposals were accessible in some form (total 89) and 54 of the 89 final reports were also accessible. Unsuccessful proposals are kept on file but access to them was not granted. Therefore this report can only refer to successful projects.

All proposals and projects were read and grouped according to topic, intended outcomes and disciplinary location of the project leader, by both the researcher and the research assistant, to ensure consistency of categories. It should be noted that there have been some changes in faculty organisation over the past two years, notably the demise of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the relocation (and renaming) of some departments as a result. For ease of organisation of data, projects led by staff affected by such changes have been located in their 'new' faculties (and departments), particularly Engineering and Information Sciences (EIS) and Health and Human Sciences. However, Law is recorded as a separate faculty because its incorporation into Humanities and Education did not take place until September 2003 (start of the study) and the effects of this reorganisation were far less complex than with the other departments/faculties.

Interviews were undertaken with seven past project leaders who between them had been funded for twelve different projects between 1996 and 2003. This was a purposeful sample, selected to cover a range of disciplines. A semi-structured interview schedule was used (Appendix 1), and a contemporaneous written record made of responses. Most interviews took approximately 40 minutes and were conducted by the research assistant, in staff offices, at times convenient to them.

A short, market research-style survey (Appendix 2) of 78 randomly selected staff was also conducted, to discover what staff in general know about, and think about, the LTDF awards. The survey covered all three main campuses and primarily accessed respondents who were entering or leaving Senior Common Rooms or refectories. This survey took around two minutes for each respondent to complete.

The Findings

Successful Departments and Faculties/Centres

Computer Science has had the most funded projects (18). Education is second (11) and Life Sciences third (9). Equal fourth come Nursing and Midwifery (7) and Psychology (7). See Fig. 1.

When we look at the *faculty* location of projects, EIS is the most successful with 27, Health & Human Sciences second with 26 and Humanities and Education third with 18. All other Faculties/Centres have had less than 6 funded projects (see Fig. 2). Without access to unsuccessful proposals it is not possible to assess whether this is a fair distribution based on origin of applications. The strength of Computer Science, within EIS, may lie in the University's emphasis on the development of StudyNet (a MLE) between 1998 and 2003.
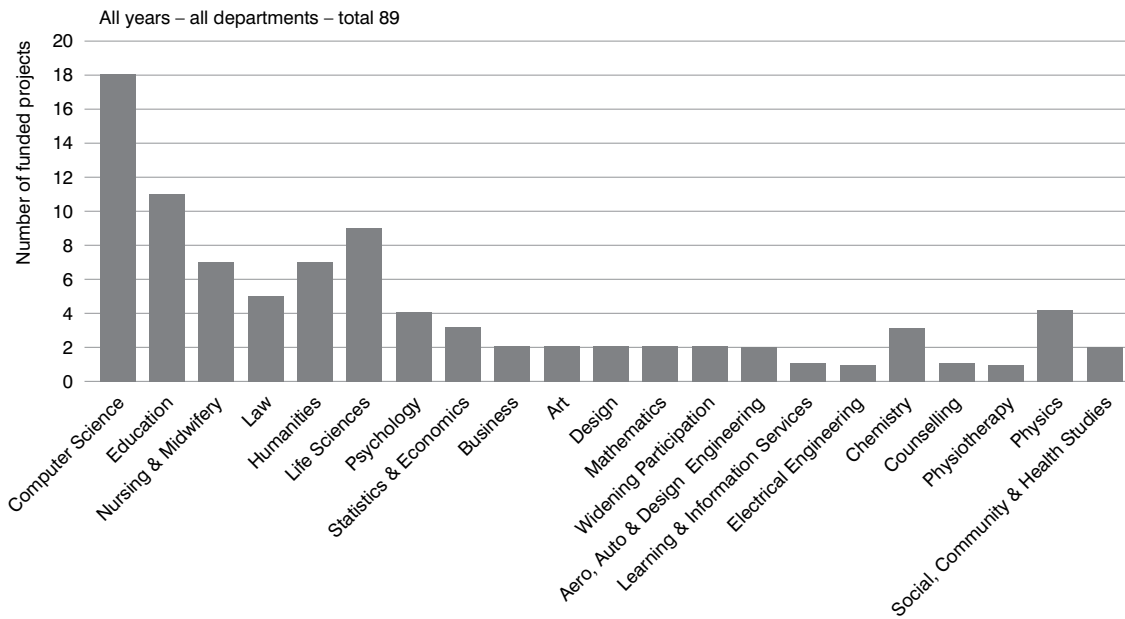
All years – all departments – total 89

Figure 1: Funded projects awarded to different Departments/Centres
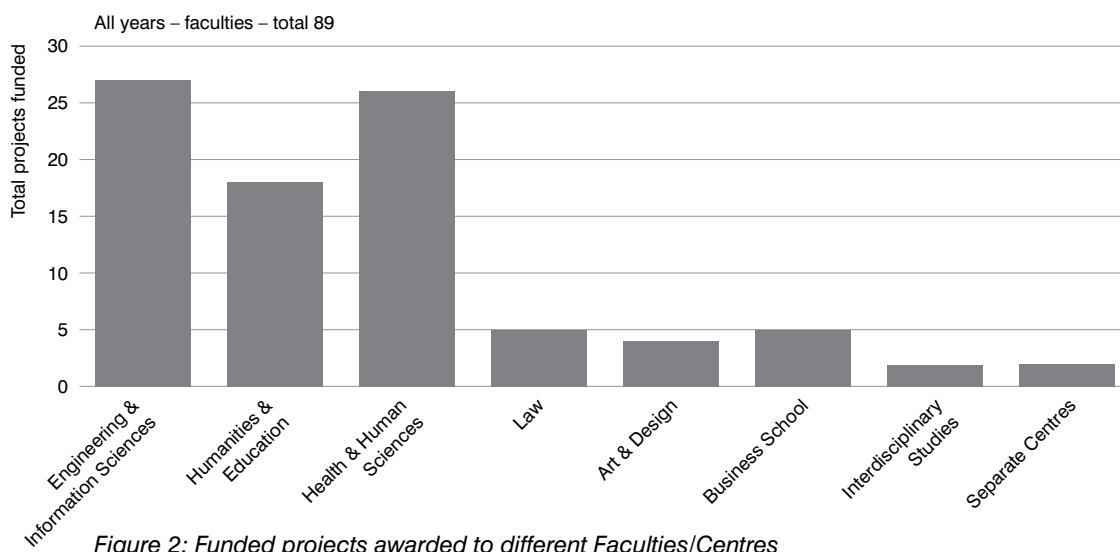
All years – faculties – total 89

Figure 2: Funded projects awarded to different Faculties/Centres

Styles and Types of projects that are funded
The analysis of Department/Faculty/Centre
locations for funded projects (above) is based
on the discipline and affiliation of project
leaders. In contrast, the 'style' of learning
and teaching project cuts across
faculty/departmental subject affiliation,
and it should be noted that many funded
projects are proposed by interdisciplinary
teams of staff. Table 1 shows the distribution
of project styles.

Table 1: Project Styles

Using Technology and Teaching (Web, StudyNet)	47
Using Technology and Teaching (video, audio)	6
Non-Technology Projects	36
Total	89

Table 2 shows the distribution of project types.
As can be seen from both tables, 53/89 of the
projects are technology-styled. 44/89 are
resources for learning and teaching, often very
subject- or course-specific, in the form, for
example, of CD-ROMs, videos, web materials for
teaching content, handbooks or study guides.
The remaining 45/89 cover a range of 'types' that
include teaching strategies, skills, evaluation and
assessment, student support and partnerships
and placements, most of which are designed to
improve teaching or enhance student learning in
some way or another.

Perhaps surprisingly, only 17/89 are
specifically about teaching strategies/methods or
student learning (for example, problem-based
learning, reflection, critical thinking), and only
6/89 are about skills development (which, like
teaching strategies, can also be generic).

The contents of the 54 available Project
Report summaries suggest that 23 have some

clearly generalisable features; 17 might possibly
be used effectively beyond their initial context; 10
seem highly unlikely to have further application
and 4 definitely do not!

Table 2: Project Types

Resources for Learning and Teaching – technology	34
Resources for Learning and Teaching	10
Teaching Strategies (including Reflection) – technology	10
Teaching Strategies (including Reflection)	7
Equal Opportunities/student welfare and support – technology	2
Equal Opportunities/student welfare and support	6
Evaluation, Assessment and Improvement of Courses – technology	7
Evaluation, Assessment and Improvement of Courses	2
Skills for work or study	6
Placements and Partnerships	5
Total	89

The Staff Survey
There were 78 short-survey responses from a
random selection of academic staff (approx.
10%). Amongst this sample of staff there is
widespread knowledge that LTDF projects exist
(74%), but only 28% could name what they
thought were any really good/useful projects.
These were mainly referred to as
interesting/good projects and were often
referenced back to a particular member of
staff, such as, 'I remember X did something

really interesting on…' Only 12% specifically cited a particular project as having been used by or useful to them (9 in total). All 9 of these citations mentioned either SMIRK[2]-, plagiarism- or StudyNet-related projects.

In terms of the aims of this study, we deduce from the staff survey that there is seemingly a lack of impact, longevity and take-up of project outcomes beyond their immediate settings. Much dissemination seems to hinge upon knowing a person involved with a project. Wider application and dissemination is limited. However, it would seem likely that some projects may have a localised impact that the short survey was not able to assess but which the staff interviews did indicate, namely within specific course teams or departments. Perhaps a linear tracking model, from project leader to the course team of which the project leader is a member, to department staff and to students, rather than a random survey of staff would be a more effective method to use than the short-survey approach. Local impact needs to be assessed more locally than the staff short survey was able to do. There is also the possibility that some past project outcomes and/or resources have become so embedded within course content and staff group culture that they are no longer recognised as originating from LTDF projects.

According to the staff survey, only a small number of really innovative projects with generic application have had wider impact. As noted above, these are SMIRK- plus some plagiarism- or StudyNet-related projects.

The Project Leader Interviews
Seven past project leaders were interviewed. Between them they had undertaken 12 of the projects covered by this study. Interviewees stated that outcomes from 9 of the 12 projects are still being used by them or their students.

Of these, 8 are also stated to be used across their departments or faculties, by staff colleagues and their students. One is available online and used nationally and internationally as an online teaching resource, demonstrating workshop techniques in art and design.

In terms of the aims of this study, from the interviews with project leaders, there is impact, longevity and take-up of project outcomes, by self, students, some departmental staff and sometimes beyond these immediate locations. Several interviewees stated that wider application and dissemination is being achieved through L&T conferences, in-house and nationally, and through CELT (Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching) courses and workshops.

It should be recognised that these interviewees are 'in the know' in terms of demonstrating a prior commitment to at least some aspect of learning and teaching, not least because they actually applied for, and received, LTDF money. Successful participation appears to reinforce their commitment to the enhancement of learning and teaching (Hawthorne Effect, Mayo, 1933)[3], and their desire to make it more 'mainstream' amongst their colleagues. They appear to have many more ideas and suggestions for 'greater impact' and 'ways forward' than do members of staff who have not been directly involved in any of the projects.

Formal Dissemination
All project leaders are required, upon completion of the project (which usually takes one academic year), to submit a two-page summary report. This must indicate what work was undertaken, what outcomes were achieved, the transferability of outcomes to other areas and how outcomes are being disseminated. These reports are available to all staff on the University website. In addition, all

project leaders must present their findings at an annual Learning and Teaching Conference. This is advertised across the University, through email, and all staff, whether involved in particular projects or not, are invited to attend. However, most staff choosing to attend have been involved in LTDF projects in some way, either in the current year or in previous years. In many ways this conference is preaching to the converted.

Alternative methods of dissemination, particularly within course-group, departmental and faculty meetings, all of which are frequently mentioned in project reports, may have the effect of reaching a larger number of 'uncommitted' staff, given that attendance at such meetings is less likely to be optional.

The Findings

Has the 'project on projects' achieved its aims? A small number of projects can be seen to have delivered significant outcomes that are current, generalisable and of direct use to a wide range of staff within and beyond the University itself. It is possible that other projects have delivered outcomes that are still in use on specific courses with local impact but which this 'project on projects' was unable to access.

It is clear that the outcomes of many projects are highly localised, course-specific and context-bound. While many staff know about the LTDF programme and value it, specific projects are less well known and appear to have had little direct impact on teaching and learning in general. Dissemination through the annual Learning and Teaching Conference is largely to the 'already converted'.

Where project proposals are accepted and funded one must assume that, if successful, they will have met the strategic objectives of the University as this is a key feature of the bidding process. Most clearly have a positive impact on

learning and teaching, be they technology-, resource- or teaching-strategy-based (see Table 2), albeit perhaps too frequently limited to a fairly narrow context and staff group. Given the apparent lack of staff knowledge about most projects, it is difficult to claim, for example, that 'high levels of innovation and dissemination of good practice' have been achieved in the majority of projects. This does not mean that learning and teaching has not been enhanced. It is a question of scale and location. There are significantly fewer projects addressing equal opportunities and skills development than there are projects addressing technology/StudyNet issues so the strategic objectives are not being evenly met through LTDF.

SMIRK-, plagiarism- and StudyNet-related projects are the most widely known amongst staff. All three tend to have general rather than course- or subject-specific application. Some subject-specific online resources, such as workshop techniques in Art and Design, are likely to be long lasting, well known and well used within their disciplinary context.

Recommendations for future LTDF guidelines and project assessment

- It should be recognised that, at an individual level, obtaining and completing a LTDF project in itself has the potential to enhance personal and professional development and staff commitment to learning and teaching, irrespective of the project outcomes. Whatever level they start at, a successful project moves them on. Project leaders can become the next evangelists for learning and teaching.

- It should also be recognised that gains have been made in student support and tutor resource bases even though many of these may be small-scale, localised and even personal.

- Where possible, widen the range of staff who bid and are successful, perhaps by ring-fencing money for first-time bidders.

- Where possible, widen the range of proposals/successful projects to cover all the University's strategic objectives more evenly.

- Consider formally recognising the achievements of leaders of particularly successful projects, e.g. through new routes to promotion, Vice Chancellor's Awards, Teaching Fellowships.

- Consider giving a best project of the year award at the annual Learning and Teaching Conference, for dissemination and motivation purposes.

- Staff awareness of projects could be enhanced through regularly advertised Web access to project reports and the production of an annual hard-copy volume, freely distributed amongst staff.

- Particularly exciting projects that have wider application should be disseminated through lunchtime workshops. Context-bound projects should be disseminated widely within course teams and, where appropriate, departments.

- Reference should be made to appropriate HE Academy Subject Centres when considering initial proposals and as a vehicle for wider dissemination within the subject community.

- Any gains in student achievement/ satisfaction/retention as a result of the project should be explicitly measured and shared (but this is likely to take longer than the one academic year timescale between proposal and report).

- Consider funding assessments of the impact a selection of individual context-bound/localised projects have had.

- Ensure that the bidding process is transparent and fair across individuals and departments. A depersonalised list of bids received, accepted and rejected should be available to all.

- Ensure that full explanations for rejection are given, and provide help to formulate successful bids.

Conclusions

Do LTDF projects have the potential to achieve high levels of innovation, the dissemination of good practice and wider application? Yes, at least some of them do, but many do not. Their impact on others generally appears limited and patchy, although the LTDF is widely known about in general terms. There are some indications from the project leader interviews that local impact longevity, and take-up of project outcomes might be more significant than the short survey used in this study was able to discover. This could be addressed by taking a modest sample of projects and exploring their impact in small-scale local contexts.

The assessment of whether 'value' has been 'added' is more difficult. In the small number of specific cases cited above, LTDF projects have had University-wide impact and recognition. SMIRK, for example, has been actively disseminated through staff development workshops and many developments linked to StudyNet or plagiarism policy and detection have their origins in LTDF project work. However, it may well be that the real 'value-added' arising from the LTDF is not individual project outcomes

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themselves, or their take-up by others, but rather its impact on staff consciousness and priorities. Following Barlow's (1995) earlier work, we would agree with him that the following is likely to happen:

> Through projects, individual staff gain a sense of recognition for their work and are motivated to contribute to the achievement of institutional goals... Staff report benefits professionally and personally from being involved in project work. They are refreshed by the opportunity to pursue an aspect of their teaching in depth, to see their work in a broader context, and to exchange ideas with colleagues beyond their own departments and courses.

Awareness that there is money available for teaching and learning projects is strong and serves to:

- counter staff views that there is only money in research
- raise awareness of the importance of learning and teaching
- encourage staff to consider developing their teaching practices.

Those staff who have received LTD funds are amongst the most committed, within the University, to continued development of learning and teaching. If 'value-added' can be obtained by adding to their numbers then this may well be the most effective way forward. It is not necessarily the outcomes they achieve with their projects that have most impact. Rather, it is the enhanced commitment to the development of learning and teaching that frequently seems to follow. However, a word of warning! A few staff whose applications for LTDF projects were turned down were resentful

and potentially discouraged from making further bids. Transparency in the process and full explanations for rejection are necessary, as is help to formulate successful bids.

References
Barlow, J. (1995) 'Releasing Staff on Projects', in *Directions in Staff Development,* Ed. A. Brew, Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) and Open University Press, Buckingham, pp.64-80

Laurillard, D. and McAndrew, P. (2002) *Virtual Teaching Tools: Bringing academics closer to the design of e-learning, Networked Learning 2002,* Proceedings of the Third International Conference, Sheffield University

Mayo, E. (1933) *The human problems of an industrial civilization* (New York: MacMillan) ch.3

National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the Learning Society (1997) *Higher Education in the Learning Society (Dearing Report),* HMSO/NCIHE, London

Appendix 1

An Evaluation of the Initial Impact, Longevity and Spread of LTDF Project Outcomes

Interview Schedule
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this project.

Q1: Can you start by telling me what your particular LTDF project(s) were about?

Q2: How did you disseminate your results/resources/outcomes?

Q3: Were you happy with the final result of the project(s)?

Q4: Are the results of your project(s) still being used?

    If YES: by whom? For what?
    If NO: How long was it used for?
    What happened to it/your results?

Q5: Who or what do you think has benefited from you doing this project(s)?

Q6: The projects all have to meet one or more of the University's Strategic Aims. Can you remember which one(s) yours related to?

Q7: Did your results/resources/outcomes actually meet the aims you specified?

Q8: Has anyone contacted you about your project – perhaps with the idea of using it themselves, or adapting it for themselves?

Q9: Do you know about anyone else's LTDF projects?

    If YES: Which ones do you feel are particularly good/useful?

Q10: How do you find out about other people's projects (past or present)?

Q11: Do you know if anyone else has done something similar to you?

If YES: What project was it?
Did you use any knowledge from that project in yours?
Did you find out about it before or after you had completed your project?

Q12: What do you think about LTDF projects overall?

Prompts:
    Worthwhile, successful, useful, widely used, long-lasting?
    A waste of money, not generalisable, too narrow, overlap? Other?

Q13: Will you apply again for LTDF funds?

    If YES: What area/issues will it focus on?
    If NO: Why not?

Q14: Should the University keep this funding source for small learning and teaching projects?   YES   NO

Q15: Do you have any suggestions for improving these projects?

Prompts:
    Making them more worthwhile, generalisable to others?
    Better dissemination, easier/more equitable access to funds?

Q16: Was the funding you received enough?

Q17: Do you feel that the current system of funding is fair?

Q18: Do you have any suggestions about funding?

Thank you for taking part. The results of this project will be disseminated at the LTDF Conference next December.

Appendix 2

LTDF: Project about Projects

Short survey

a)   Are you a member of academic staff?
     YES   NO
     If yes, continue. If no, thank you anyway.

b)   Would you be willing to answer a few short
     questions about LTDF projects? It will only
     take 2 minutes.   YES   NO
     If yes, continue. If no, thank you anyway.

We are undertaking some research into LTDF
project outcomes. We would like to explore, with
a sample of academic staff, what they know
about and think about such projects. The overall
aim of the research is to make recommendations
for future LTDF project guidelines and how
proposals are assessed.

Everything you say will be treated as strictly
confidential to the researcher and project leader,
and individuals will not be identified. You may
withdraw your consent to participate at any time,
or refuse to answer any of the questions asked.

1. This is completely anonymous. I just need to
   know which School you work in.

   _____

2. Have you heard about the Learning and
   Teaching Development Fund (LTDF)?
   YES   NO

3. Have you ever applied for such funds?
   YES   NO

4. Successfully   OR   unsuccessfully?

5. Do you know of any really good/useful
   projects that have been funded in this way
   (not your own)?   YES   NO

6. If yes, can you tell me one specific thing that
   was particularly good/useful about it?

   _____

   _____

7. How do you hear about LTDF projects?

   _____

   _____

8. Where can staff find out about them?
   (e.g. website)

   _____

9. Are they a good thing to have?
   YES   NO   Why?

   _____

   _____

Many thanks for your help.

A Perspective from the Director of Academic Quality (Learning and Teaching)

by David Bonner

It was almost ten years ago that the University introduced the Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF). The idea was to provide small amounts of funding to allow staff to engage in learning and teaching development work that would help to develop new practice, and encourage a scholarly approach to learning and teaching. Since that time around 140 projects have been awarded to staff on a competitive bidding basis for sums varying from £1000 to £9000. The investment by the University has amounted to a total of some £500,000 over the period, and the annual sum invested was raised to £80k in 2002/3. In recent years a specified proportion of the annual fund has been earmarked for technology-based projects, which have largely centred around StudyNet developments. The outcomes of projects are disseminated through the annual Learning and Teaching Conference, and in addition there are many examples of University staff presenting the outcomes of their projects at conferences elsewhere. Recently some projects have provided the material for papers in this Journal.

The LTDF initiative was utilised in the Centre for Excellence in Blended Learning recently awarded to the University. The virtues of the initiative were seen as having great relevance in promoting pedagogical research into approaches to Blended Learning, and there is funding in the CeTL award to support so-called BLU-Sky projects. This funding matches that provided by the University so that the annual sum available is now £160,000. This has proved very attractive to staff and the number of project bids in July 2005 – the first occasion that BLU-Sky funds were available – was almost doubled.

The research reported by Mary Thornton was itself funded by LTDF in order to determine the effectiveness of LTDF in terms of impact and dissemination. She concludes that the

LTDF initiative has in some cases given rise to *'high levels of innovation, dissemination of good practice and wider application'*. Even where wider influence has not been achieved, the importance of reported local impact should not be ignored. The importance to individuals in their personal development is also a significant benefit. Winning an LTDF project can bring significant strength to a bid for a Vice-Chancellor's Prize, or a bid for promotion. It would also carry significant weight in University Teaching Fellowship and National Teaching Fellowship bids. Thus the LTDF initiative certainly has an important place within the array of measures to encourage and reward excellent teaching and enhance learning.

Nevertheless, it is clear that more needs to be done to enable the University to get the best return for this investment, by improving the impact of LTDF and BLU-Sky projects. The recommendations above are considered here in this light. The recommendations may be grouped into four categories: the bidding process; measures of impact; dissemination; and associated benefits to bidders.

The bidding process

Some of the recommendations are already at least partly in place, notably the ring-fencing of funds for new staff which applies in the BLU-Sky projects, ensuring that full explanations for rejecting a bid are given together with support for bidders, and ensuring that the bid process is fair and transparent. Two recommendations deserve further thought. The suggestion to refer to the appropriate HE Academy Subject Centre is just one aspect of the wider issue of the extent to which a proposal should review previous work in the area. Whilst the repetition of work already undertaken elsewhere is to be avoided, it is important that the bidding process should not become burdensome. The suggestion that the range of proposals should be widened to

better represent the University's strategic objectives is helpful, but difficult to achieve whilst at the same time allowing staff to pursue areas in which they have a personal interest.

Measures of impact
There are two recommendations in this category. The first is really a statement that reinforces the view expressed above that, although project outcomes may be small-scale and local, they may nonetheless carry real benefits for students. Acceptance of this recommendation might lead to a reconsideration of the bid criteria, but it will be important for these apparently more modest outcomes to be measured in the project. The second makes the point that the benefits to students arising from a project may not be evident immediately, and this raises an important point about longer-term monitoring of new initiatives. The format of the LTDF process is predicated on short-term, small-scale projects. Perhaps this recommendation might lead to restrictions in the type of project proposed unless longer-term monitoring can be assured.

Dissemination
The point is made that the principal means of dissemination is through the annual Learning and Teaching Conferences, but that this is largely an exercise in *'preaching to the already converted'*. Whilst this may be true at present, the conference is an important event in the University's calendar, and CELT plans to look at ways to attract more staff to the conference. However dissemination is a key activity if project outcomes are to benefit a greater proportion of the University's students, and in this regard Mary Thornton includes some helpful recommendations, including special events to disseminate projects which are particularly exciting. CELT will give this careful thought.

Benefits to bidders
The recommendation related to recognition of the achievements of successful project leaders already applies in that, as previously mentioned, success in the LTDF process can strengthen the case made by an individual in many contexts. If the recommendation is intended to suggest that a reward for LTDF success should follow as a matter of course, then this would be unlikely to find favour as there are very many other factors that need to be considered. The recommendation of a prize for the best project of the year is an excellent one, which should be adopted as soon as possible.

In conclusion, there are some helpful pointers in this research to ways in which the University can improve the return on its investment in LTDF. These will be taken forward through a review of the LTDF process. The LTDF has served the University well in terms of the large number of projects funded, the encouragement and support to many staff in their learning and teaching development, and the development of some new practices, over a number of years. But the time is now right to look more closely at the balance between the benefits to individual staff and the need to achieve impact for the University from the investment.

Biographical notes

Mary Thornton began her teaching career as a primary school teacher in the London Borough of Brent. She joined the University in 1985 as a teacher educator, specialising in mathematics, equality issues and the Sociology of Education. She is now Assistant Director, Learning and Teaching in the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) at the University of Hertfordshire. Within CELT she is responsible for research into learning and teaching in higher education, widening participation and equality issues. Mary teaches on a range of professional development courses and is a National Teaching Fellow.

David Bonner was Head of the Civil Engineering Department at the University before moving on to Associate Dean roles for Learning and Teaching and Academic Quality in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences. In his current role he is responsible for the University's strategic development of Learning and Teaching, and for the implementation of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. He leads the University's Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, and also has oversight of the quality and standards of the University's collaborative provision both in the UK and overseas. He is a member of the QAA Benchmarking Steering Group, representing Engineering, and currently chairs the review of the QAA Engineering Subject Benchmark.

Endnotes

[1] An ad hoc survey of educational developers in England confirms at least 26 such initiatives.

[2] SMIRK: simple media-integrating resource creator -- a tool for capturing, producing and then sending audio-visual presentations over the internet.

[3] 'Hawthorne Effect' refers to the feeling that participants, in this case Project Leaders, were being closely attended to and that this was the cause of the improvements in commitment to learning and teaching enhancement.