

HE Research and the EEDA Skills Agenda

A study commissioned by the Association of Universities in the East of England (AUEE) and the East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

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Report and Annotated Bibliography
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HE Research and the EEDA Skills Agenda

Introduction

The starting point for this work was the belief that one of the contributions which higher education in the region could and should be making to the EEDA Skills Agenda is to ensure that its development is informed by the research that is taking place, or has recently taken place, in universities across the region.

The specific aim of the research was to identify:

- What research is already available in the region which relates to the EEDA skills agenda.
- What research capacity there is in the region which can contribute to informing that agenda.

Its primary purpose was to map HE research about the Eastern Region in order to give EEDA and members of AUEE an overall picture of the research that has been conducted so far, and to subsequently identify gaps and signpost future research issues and potential research capacity in the region.

There were three stages to the project:

- Stage One - to collect information about research publications and reports which are already available from the EEDA higher education institutions, and to then write and issue an annotated bibliography of these publications.
- Stage Two - to hold a regional research seminar, jointly with EEDA, in order to discuss the research results and identify key issues that will require further inquiry.

- Stage Three - to write a report on the research and seminar outcomes, to be presented to the HE Forum, EEDA and AUEE.

The Report is written and presented in 3 parts: a report on the task of conducting the research, an annotated bibliography and a report on the Regional Seminar.

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Part One – Report on the Research Task

Introduction

Part One reports on the process of conducting the research and the significant points learnt about the relationship of HEIs to their regional agendas and roles by engaging in this process.

The research began with a clear aim to identify, collect and annotate the research that has been produced on skill development and the employability agenda in higher education that relates to the EEDA skills agenda. However, slippage in the remit took place early on in this task. This was due to two primary factors that early on configured both the scope and the limitations of the task:

- Firstly, the fact that the university staff the investigator was specifically directed to as a result of her requests for information were mainly those involved or located in areas or departments in the universities seen to be directly concerned with initiatives of skill development, career advice or widening participation, such as a Careers Centre or a Centre for Continuing Education. This almost guaranteed that the search and the identification of relevant HE research could be marginalised from the start.

This factor is not altogether surprising. Regional research on skills development, and the related issues of employability and employment, labour market intelligence, rurality, the widening participation agenda and the mismatch between current and required skill base, are more easily identified in such areas than the more traditional 'academic' or discipline-based Schools or Departments in a University.

Relevant research could no doubt also be found in Schools or Departments of Management or Education, for example, but there was a perception by respondents that research on labour market intelligence or employability carried out in traditional or academic 'disciplines' would more likely be conducted and reported on a national or a global scale than on a regional basis. Indeed, this is often the case.

It was clear early on that searching for and identifying the all kind of research looked for would entail researching individually each School or Department in each University. Universities do not collate and hold all their institutional research work, in its many different forms on fully informed organisational databases. Working through a number of Schools in one University was attempted in one case, but this task proved to be extremely time-consuming, and with little reward.

- Secondly, the notion of 'research' being interpreted fairly loosely in response to enquiries.

Crucially, 'research' is usually only one dimension of the kind of work taking place in higher education that would appear to respond to EEDA's agenda. Strictly, many higher education initiatives relating to the skills and employability agenda, a number of which may well be labelled 'research', are developmental, innovatory or pilot R & D initiatives. So when seeking to find 'research' the investigator was usually directed towards current and completed work that was often, more accurately, described as 'projects'. These projects were rarely perceived as mainstream university work, not being considered either straight teaching or straight research activity. Under these circumstances, identifying

and annotating the documentation and products of these projects, many of which contain a number of developmental elements as well as some research, was a fruitful option to follow.

In the desire to offer some form of relevant material, university personnel presented other but related documentation – certainly of interest to the subject of but tangential to the actual research. For example, other documents submitted included:

- Proposals for projects and research
- Relevant items and pages extracted from University Strategic Plans, particularly those concerning Learning and Teaching strategies.
- University strategies for developing key skills and employability skills
- Models to operationalise such strategies
- Catalogues of employment opportunities for graduates and students

So although the research began with a tight remit, this gradually loosened as the reality of working in the context in which such research was being conducted took precedence. Slippage into an audit of HE activity in the case of skills, employability and the labour market rather than purely the identification of research was hard to resist.

Coming across the above factors was not totally unexpected. But their explicit identification, and the limitations they pose, are nevertheless crucial issues that have significant implications for EEDA aspirations underpinning tasks such as this one. They are issues that point directly towards questions of knowledge management within individual institutions and across the eastern region. The issue of knowledge management is becoming increasingly central to universities as they take on wider roles and functions in society, and technological advances challenge their hold and dependence on their traditional territories. It is also fundamental to the aims of developing the EEDA skills strategy and action plan in a co-ordinated, coherent and progressive manner.

The EEDA Skills agenda and Higher Education Curricula

At this point, it is worth briefly reminding ourselves of the EEDA skills agenda. Within the EEDA strategy for making *'the East of England a world class economy, renowned for its knowledge base, the creativity and enterprise of its people and the quality of life for all who live and work here'*, four priorities are identified for the regional skills agenda:

- *To develop a co-ordinated learning infrastructure that delivers the skills needed by business and individuals*
- *To focus learning and skills providers on the needs of emerging and key sectors*
- *To establish a culture of lifelong learning*
- *To widen and increase participation, to raise levels of achievement and to tackle social exclusion (EEDA 2000)*

These regional imperatives and strategies closely echo national priorities for higher education. For example, higher education links to the economy and employability are spelled out very clearly in 'Higher Education for the 21st Century: Response to the Dearing Report' published by the DfEE (1998) in parallel with the Green Paper 'The Learning Age': *'The Government sees higher education playing a key role in life long learning and wants to see it making an even bigger contribution in the future by:*

- *increasing and widening participation, particularly from groups who are under-represented in higher education, including people with disabilities and young people from semi-skilled on unskilled family background and from disadvantaged localities;*
- *offering opportunities later in life to those who missed out first time round*
- *increasing its contribution to the economy and its responsiveness to the needs of business;*

- *collaborating more closely and effectively with other institutions and with the world of work;*
- *exploiting new technology and flexible delivery so as to make itself more accessible and ensuring that maximum use is made of its facilities through longer opening hours.'*

Although many people in higher education are aware of the above agenda, few people spoken to in the universities during this research were aware of EEDA, or the EEDA skills strategy and action plan. It needs to be noted also that the above aims do not directly constitute part of the core curriculum of higher education in many academics' eyes. Few thought of research in such matters from a regional perspective, or what some people considered to be such a 'utilitarian' aspect.

This does not mean of course that people in higher education are not in some part contributing to similar aims or working towards the four priorities outlined in the EEDA action plan, nor that they are not addressed or embedded within undergraduate or post-graduate courses or curricula. But it does mean that identifying and untangling research and development strands of the EEDA skills agenda from a full university 'curriculum' of teaching and research, and then auditing them through the EEDA framework of aspirations and actions, is problematic.

Finding the research

Finding and knowing the research base and the research capacity of the EEDA skills agenda within the AUEE has to be fundamental to this endeavour. But how difficult was it to do so?

'It must be like pulling teeth' (response was made by a University staff member when the research task was explained to him)

All too often, initial responses from university staff to requests for research included:

- *not aware of any such research in the University*
- *cannot or would not know how to find any research on those subjects in the University*
- *would pass on the request to someone who might know*
- *too busy at the moment*

Such responses are significant indicators of the extent of the awareness and/or the importance of research in skill development and employability that some in higher education attach to these issues. Points made by those who were actually employed in pursuing these agendas were that:

- although much activity concerning these issues was taking place in certain sections of their universities, little was documented, as it was mainly developmental work
- even less of what documentation that was available, was written or presented as 'straight' research
- many of the development programmes were either generated from or drew on national rather than regional programmes, models or pilots.
- EEDA and AUEE, as regional agencies, have had little impact on people in higher education so far, and they were therefore rarely aware of similar or complementary work taking place in neighbouring institutions.

It could be argued at this point that there is research and activity related to the EEDA agenda available to the region, albeit fragmentary, but it is invisible to all but those who sponsor it, are engaged in conducting it or explicitly seek it out.

Invisible assets

If an experienced researcher, who understands and works within university infrastructures and hierarchies, has immense difficulty in investigating what research, or other information, is available, then what chance

do others have of discovering this material? Regional research and development on the issues of skill development, employability, labour markets, mismatches of needs and training, is taking place, but much of it is invisible to most people who would find it of interest and value.

Further, there are levels of invisibility. One level has already been identified by the challenge of finding research directly related and titled to the issues in question. Other levels certainly exist. For example:

- Many regionally based post-graduate students engaged in work-based learning and work-based degree courses are conducting regional research on the issues concerned, drawing on data from local public and private sector organisations. Such courses are both instrumental and intellectual endeavours, and contain empirical data and rigorous analysis of useful and highly relevant data. They also address the management of organisational innovation and change. Most of this work is then carefully reported and documented in masters and doctoral thesis, placed on School or private shelves and is subsequently, and practically, lost to the public domain.
- Much academic research is conducted and reported for a national or international academic audience. Academic career trajectories are based and built on this kind of output or product. Few research studies are conducted specifically on the Eastern Region, unless specifically funded or commissioned to do so. But, in some cases, local knowledge and local data is drawn on as part of the research investigation. This is rarely identified, but would be of value to regional forums if known about. Further, forms of dissemination of such output are more likely to be through academic arenas or publications than ones through which organisations might draw on.
- Key Skills are often integrated into HE curricula and courses, as well as being distinct, in the terms of teaching, learning and assessment, in the more marginalised sections of a University. Academics make the point that separating student skill development and assessment, and research on that form of development, from the context and discipline in which they are working can render it meaningless and is counter-productive.

Re-iterating the point made earlier, there does appear to be a fair amount of research and development in HE. Some is clearly labelled and located, such as in Careers, Continuing Education or Skill Programmes, and to some extent, in Schools or Departments concerned with Management or Departments having links with industry. But as much is buried deep in institutions, where either R & D or straight research is taking place in small fragments or implicitly in wider programmes or projects. But there are currently few formal or simple mechanisms that offer either the insider or the outsider easy knowledge or access to such material. This crucial point concerns the difficulty of:

- knowing what material and research is available?
- knowing where to look?
- knowing who to ask?
- knowing how to access it?

Although these days, the first port of call would probably be to University websites, which may indeed, after careful searching, yield useful fruit, much of the work relevant to EEDA is invisible to many people, even inside a university. A further crucial question is how would EEDA and/ or local employers be able to use, productively, the fragments of information, some of which are substantial, that they could access from the various institutions?

What was found and what is needed

An analysis of respondent data and the list of research material and information found suggests the following points:

- There is information, research and documentation in the eastern region universities which is

pertinent to the EEDA skills and employability agenda: policies, strategies, projects and programmes charged with the purpose of introducing, piloting or embedding initiatives related to key skills and employability. These are mainly based on the skills as identified and outlined by government agencies and bodies, such as Dearing, Universities UK, HEFCE, DfEE for example, rather than those being identified by local or regional employers. No doubt they have similar agendas, but universities are mainly attending to the imperatives and strictures of the former. This is not surprising as the criteria for skill development and assessment are now being laid down in national benchmarking and assessment regimes, and sharing of developmental work cuts across regional boundaries. So, for example, models of student skill development, both on paper and on-line are being constructed and shared on a national basis.

- Individual Universities do conduct research and evaluations on the stated issues, but when doing so, attend primarily to their own agendas, mission statements, strategic objectives and progress on these fronts. Research and reports found were usually based on the work relating to individual universities and their concerns, albeit local organisations may have been involved, or based on national concerns and data. Networks and collaborations, like the Four Counties Group of Higher Education Institutions 'Widening Participation Project 2000' for example, do exist in the eastern region, increasingly so, but generally, do not have a high profile either within their own institutions nor across the institutions. To varying extents, they are still perceived to exist on the margins of mainstream university life. Finding and knowing the people who are engaged in this kind of research and development is often serendipitous and partial. More often than not, respondents asked for more information than they were in a position to offer. People suggested that having a conceptual overview of what has been done, what is being done, (and what is planned), and of the key players involved in each University, could only be beneficial and advantageous.
- A major deficiency is a lack of research in the management of innovation or change in universities and/or regional organisations. Many initiatives and innovations are taking place on the periphery of HE, initiated and dependent on short-term or time-limited funding. Because many are conducted on the margins, they are often staffed by people who are on contracts which are income-stream dependent. When the income streams and funding disappear so do the initiatives, as often do the staff also. Respondents indicated that this (common) practice in universities is counter-productive to sustainability, and the thorough research required on what are, sometimes, radical changes. It means that it is conducted through an inefficient or poor use of human resource; that people are required to be more concerned with implementation than long-term organisational research and reflection which investigates the embeddedness, capacity and sustainability of HE to advance these various initiatives.
- Related to the previous point, the form and manner of funding and sponsorship of research and development into areas that interest EEDA was of concern to people, having implications for the purpose, type and eventual use that such research would engender. Specific and targeted funding for imperatives to advance and change university agendas and curricula is initially attractive to bid for as it provides much appreciated (or even essential financial benefits) to organisations which increasingly find themselves being required to operate as businesses as much as educational institutions. Respondents suggested, however, that the kind of short-term funding which prompts many of the initiatives that attempt to move universities in certain directions and create certain changes, do not address the major issues of sustainability. A further point made was that funding for initiatives or research or initiatives can be fragmented, being offered by a number of agencies and bodies, which do not always work in harmony with each other. For example, some of the research/project reports found comprised a series of studies or developmental works, each building on each other, but these were rare, and were reported to be reluctantly 'abandoned' where no extra funding was forthcoming. In other cases, people attempting to develop rigorous and coherent research in particular areas, are forced to look for, and chase, what they consider opportunistic funding possibilities rather than guaranteed recurrent funding streams.

What capacity is there?

The majority of funding appears to be concentrated on developmental work rather than research of the initiatives. Evaluations are often built into projects, but they are short term and look at initiatives piecemeal rather than within the whole organisational context or long-term sustainability and embeddedness. Respondents to this research task, many of whom are centrally involved in the initiation and development of initiatives related to the EEDA agenda indicated that they were now at a stage where they had begun to identify fundamental HE issues of institutional policy and mission, curricula, economics, human resource and organisation infrastructure which had implications for universities' relationship with EEDA and its skills agenda. The over-riding problem was that of the lack of research capacity to carry out such work.

Where the resource for increasing the capacity is to come from, people are not sure. Other agencies and funding bodies in the region (apart from EEDA) who have an interest include, for example, the new Learning and Skills Councils and the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), both of which hold a substantial brief (and attendant funding) for the identification, development, assessment and creditation of key and wider skills. There are of course, others. Finding, submitting bids to and cohering the research from the different agencies, and then ensuring such research works dovetail with and inform each other, does not look to be an easy task.

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PART TWO: The Annotated Bibliography

There are a number of points to note at this stage.

- It would be difficult to make a judgement on the breadth, scope, content and quality of the research available. Clearly, the list of publications and documents in the annotated bibliography do not represent the regions' research output or the research and development activities engaged in.
- It is also crucial to note, therefore, that the following bibliography is not a representative list for each University or College. If an AUEE University or College is not listed it does not mean that there is, or there has not been, no research or development work in these areas going on in that institution. It just means that it was not found.
- It is noticeable that the largest number of items listed is from UEA, where the research investigator works. Two points to make in this case: it was through a combination of professional knowledge, personal connections and an intimacy with the University infrastructure that helped with the identification of research and work, and, it is probably not a complete list.

Keeping the above points in mind, this bibliography comprises publications from Universities within AUEE which are primarily concerned with issues of skill development, employability and the labour market within the Eastern Region. An attempt has been made to stay within the remit of research publications, but as has been outlined in the first part of this report, most work on these issues could be more accurately described as being R & D products and publications. Also, many draw on and contain analysis of a range of relevant documentation and information and research both from a regional and

national basis. They are produced in a number of forms, the main four being papers, booklets, files and on-line.

It is difficult to categorise the publications, or to offer a précis or conclusions of an argument, as many of them cover a range of information and types of activity. For example, 'Graduate & Professional Skills Profiling: A collaborative approach to developing graduate level skills and facilitating lifelong learning in the workplace' (1.2) describes:

- developmental work on a profiling scheme
- research into graduate skills in the workplace
- developmental work undertaken with employers
- research into and with professional bodies.

Furthermore, this particular report is one of a (loose) set of five, written and published over a period of two years, and covering an even wider range of developmental work and research findings.

However, it is possible to make a somewhat crude, but useful, typology of the work found, with examples from the publications and products collected. Indeed, using this type of table may be of value if further research on this area is to be carried out.

Type	Features	Examples in the Annotated Bibliography
Developmental work	Often Models or Matrix: For example: - for student skill identification - either web-based or on paper-based (some have student feedback included) - for organisational change regarding work-based learning	2.2.1
Research reports	Usually a straight piece of empirical research, for example, an investigation into a specified issue with no developmental or evaluative dimensions. Recommendations may be included	2.7 4.15.1 4.15.2
Research and Development (R&D) projects or programmes	Usually conducted over a fair period of time - sometimes conducted and reported in stages or phases. Often cover a range of activities that include the introduction of innovatory policy or practice. Development and piloting of new programmes are common. Usually draw on and/or conduct different forms of research as part of the project starting point, interim reports or final reports. Often draw on contributions or perspectives of a range of stakeholders (employers, students, etc) Usually generate a range of documents, materials, information and research (models, literature searches, cases studies, evaluations, etc. Dissemination strategy and audience not always clear.	2.2.1 2.2.2 2.2.3 2.2.4 2.2.5
Conference papers	Usually written for an academic audience. Usually disseminated through academic conferences or journals.	2.5
Discussion papers	Written for a number of reasons. For example, are researched and written for specific sponsors (usually containing recommendations) or, are written to offer a starting point for a programme or project.	4.13
Theoretical papers	Usually written for an academic audience, drawing on other research rather than evidence from potential stakeholders.	4.5
Evaluations - formative or summative - of projects or programmes	Often required as condition of a project or programme funding. May be included as part of a project report or a stand-	4.2 4.3

	alone document, piece of research, separate from the report. Dissemination may not go further than project sponsors, although sponsors sometimes look for good dissemination strategy.	
Mapping studies	Analysis of documentation from different bodies, departments or organisations with aims of synergistic outcomes.	1.5
Surveys	Research usually conducted for very specific reasons and for specific sponsors.	4.11 4.12
Case Studies	Occasionally stand alone, but usually an element of wider research conducted and written as part of a project or programme.	In 6.1 2.2.4

The following is a list of the products and items found or offered during this research. Please note when examining this list that:

- The annotated items are arranged by institution rather than subject.
- The number of items under each institutional grouping is not necessarily a reflection of the amount of research or documentation that has emanated from that institution; only of the number of items the researcher has been able to access.
- Within in each institutional grouping, there is an attempt to list the items in date order. This was not always possible, as not all items are dated and one, which is posted on two websites, offers different information about dates. The date order, where utilised, begins with the earliest dates so that progression in research and development on these issues may be traced.
- Where there are related items, such as, for example, a number of reports arising from one project, or repeat surveys, these items have been clustered. This arrangement supersedes the date order arrangement.
- Notes of a main argument or thesis, or a summary of the conclusions, as might be found in some annotated bibliographies, are not attempted in this list, as the content matter does not lend itself to this kind of notation. Rather, an outline of the kind of contents under each item is given, so that the reader is offered signposts to areas of interest.

1. ANGLIA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY (APU)

1.1 Graduate Profiling: Developing a Common Approach to Identifying and Using Graduate Skills in Industry

Author: Susan Hughes
Published by: APU (April 1998)
Booklet: 40 pages

This is a report of a research project which was designed to build on an initiative within APU to develop and Undergraduate Profiling Scheme that would better prepare students for the workplace and would encourage them to take responsibility for their own career and personal development. It was also hoped that the project would contribute to the improvement of graduate recruitment in the Eastern Region and the effective utilisation of skills in the workplace by local employers. The report concludes that the aims of the project had been realised; that that further development in the Profiling process, graduate skills area and employer liaison continue, particularly concerning feeding back employer based research into the University Profiling Process and into other relevant systems.

1.2 Graduate & Professional Skills Profiling: A collaborative approach to developing graduate level skills and facilitating lifelong learning in the workplace

Author: Susan Hughes
Published by: APU (April 1999)
Booklet: 25 pages

This is an interim research project report that builds on the previous research (as outlined above) and offers a detailed description of the project's overall objectives, organisation and management. It also identifies the four main strands of the project as a) development of the Undergraduate Profiling Scheme in APU, b) research into graduate skills in the workplace, c) developmental work undertaken with employers, and d) research into and with professional bodies.

This report, and the following three reports, contribute to the final HERDF/Skills Development Fund Projects 1998-2000

1.3 Graduate Skills: How they are Developed and Deployed in the Workplace

Author: Susan Petty
Published by: APU (November 1999)
Booklet: 11 pages

This document reports on Part 1 of wider research work concerned with broadening understanding of employers' needs with regard to 'skills' and how best APU can provide for their needs. Emphasis has been placed on Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs). Part 1 (this report) discusses the deployment of skills in the workplace and offers a perspective provided by ex-students who have been employed for at least two years. It aimed to a) develop a methodology for tracking graduate level skills deployment and development in the workplace and b) research the relationship between subject-based and generic transferable skills in a range of employment contexts. Funded by Go-East and HERDF (now under remit of EEDA)

1.4 Meeting the needs of Industry: Do Graduates have the Right Skills?

Author: Susan Petty
Published by: APU (February 2000)
Booklet: 8 pages

This document reports on Part 2 of the wider research work concerned with broadening understanding of employers' needs with regard to 'skills' and how best APU can provide for their needs. It focuses on the skills required by employers to be competitive in their industry (as identified by senior personnel in participating organisations) and a discussion on labour market intelligence and its usefulness for the University.

1.5 Mapping, analysis and Critique of continuing Professional development Programmes against the University's Profiling Process

Author: Susan Petty
Published by: APU (April 2000)
Booklet: 12 pages

This research aimed to analyse the process by which Professional Institutions, such as The Royal Society of Chemistry and The Institute of Management, for example, suggest their members 'continuously professionally develop'. The assessment of these CPD programmes were then mapped out against APU's programme of self-development, 'Profiling'.

2. UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

2.1 Credit Where It's Due: Project Report

Authors: David Davies & Richard Wheeler, with contributions from Lynne Caley, Shelley Lockwood & Vanessa Nedderman, University of Cambridge Board of Continuing Education
Published by: University of Cambridge and Employment Department (1995)
Booklet: 59 pages (including Appendices)

This is a report of research and development project, which took 'credit' for adult learners as its key theme. Its starting point was the belief that liberal adult learning will endure whilst the traditional forms it assumes will change as society itself changes. It explores the potential of credit for rewarding learning in life and at work, as well as in the lecture room. The report comprises six sections: the executive summary (which outline the project objects and the key conclusions); an overview of the project and its context (both local and national); accreditation issues; curriculum change issues; quality and standards; and evaluation of the project. It was funded by the DfE (now the DfEE) in order to contribute evidence and thinking to the developing national credit frameworks and to support the Employment Department's strategic thinking in this field.

2.2. Frameworks for Effective Work-Related Learning

Authors: Lynne Caley and Elaine Hendry
University of Cambridge: Programme for Industry
Published by DfEE (April 2000) ISBN 0 9538397 0 2
File – containing 5 Reports

2.2.1 Part 1 - A new approach to work-related learning (14 pages)

Part 1 introduces the ideas that have emerged from the DfEE-funded project of the title as above. It presents arguments for the need for organisations to change their policy, practice and thinking about work-related learning, and introduces a model of a Work-related Learning Cycle that takes into account the uniqueness of each organisation and learner.

2.2.2 Part 2 – The learning environment review (14 pages)

This Part contains a self-audit questionnaire for organisations which deals specifically with the non-formal aspects of learning in an organisation. It is based on the Work-related Learning Cycle described in Part 1, and is designed to help organisations to identify the forces at work, and to subsequently design a tailor-made action plan

2.2.3 Part 3 – A guide to scoping formal learning programmes (10 pages)

Part 3 is intended as a guide to assist a process of scoping the objectives, approach and content of a formal learning programme for specified people in an organisation. It guides participants through a series of two workshops and six sessions that should culminate in the design of a learning programme which is effective, efficient and relevant to the organisation and the participants.

2.2.4 Part 4 – Case studies (11 pages)

Part 4 offers three case studies of how three very different organisations developed the above programme using the guidelines provided. These are described as action-research models of progress. The key areas of: Sensitivity to organisational and individual context; Holistic approaches; Learner-centred development; and Collaboration, offer the four central themes of investigation in the case studies.

2.2.5 Project Report (27 pages)

This final report represents the final outcome of the two-year project. It describes the background and rationale for the project. It details the various activities carried out. It outlines the dissemination strategy. It reflects on the learning achieved, and highlights issues for further investigation. An external evaluator's report is included in the Appendices.

2.3 Finding a Voice: ‘Voices from the Fens’ and Key Skills

Author: Sue Oosthuizen

Published by: University Cambridge Board of Continuing Education (undated)

Paper: 4 pages

This short paper describes the explicit commitment (albeit retrospectively) to the identification and incorporation of transferable skills to the aims and objectives of the Fenland Oral History Project (FOHP), which preceded the FCHP (see next item). A detailed argument is made for the relevance and practicality of embedding the teaching and assessment of a key skill into each of the courses developed during this project, with specific reference to issues of transferability and the role of key skills in facilitating lifelong learning. The paper ends with by outlining how key skill development will function as an integral part of the course work, rather than as an adjunct.

2.4 Fenland Community History Project: Final report 2000

Author: Sue Oosthuizen

Published by: University Cambridge Board of Continuing Education (2000)

Paper; an interim project report of 4 pages

This project is part of the HEFCE-funded Four Counties Group of Higher Education Institutions ‘Widening Participation Project 2000’. This paper reports on the three-year Fenland Community History Project (FCHP) which runs from 1999 to 2002. It lists a number of regional aims, outcome and criteria. These include; to widen participation in HE by development of new centres in rural Fenland; to focus on non-traditional learners in higher education in Fenland, in particular on older learners; to deliver part-time course in six generic key skills at Key Stage 4 accredited at HE Level 1 within the CATS, on the basis of the (draft) guidelines outlined by the QCA; and to strengthen and extend partnerships with schools and voluntary organisations in Fenland. The paper reports on Phase 1 of this project

2.5 Fostering Effective Work-Related Learning

Author: Lynne Caley

University of Cambridge: Programme for Industry

Paper: Presented at BERA Conference, University of Cardiff. September 2000 (15 pages)

This paper explores that way in which organisations invest in and manage work-based learning. Although based on the author’s research into contexts within which work-related learning can occur, it is primarily a theoretical paper which discusses the relationship between work, knowledge and ‘knowledge work’; factors that affect work-related learning; issues concerning human capital; issues concerning knowledge, and issues concerning collaboration. There is no indication as to whether the data was collected regionally or nationally.

2.6 Key Skills Implementation Needs in Schools and Colleges: an annotated bibliography

Authors: Anthony Kelly, Lesley Dee & Mel West

Available/Published on the internet by: University of Cambridge School of Education (2001)

FEDA website: website: www.feda.ac.uk :19 pages

A very useful selection of papers on the above subject, collected and collated on a national basis, is summarised reviewed and annotated. In addition to being a profitable piece of research in its own right, this work also offered a basis for the research project described below.

2.7 Research Findings by University of Cambridge (Working Title)

Authors: Tony Kelly, Lesley Dee & Mel West

Placed on the internet by University of Cambridge School of Education on two websites:

FEDA website: www.feda.ac.uk:

KSSP website: www.keyskillssupport.net (67 pages)

To be published in Autumn 2001 (no further information available)

This is a substantial report on research by the University of Cambridge School of Education on issues of embedding the teaching and assessment of key skills into the post-compulsory curriculum. The research draws on data collected from over 65 schools and colleges through interviews, seminars and a questionnaire survey. A number of key issues are addressed, including how to develop staff, student and parental understanding of the value of key skills; staff commitment and training; resourcing issues; the creation of new curriculum materials; assessment, accreditation and moderation issues; and the management of implementing such new curricula and policy. It is not clear, but it appears to be national rather than regional research. The main findings are outlined in the executive summary, and can also be found in 'Key Skills Support Programme News' (November 2000) pages 12-13.

3. THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

3.1 Managing Knowledge and Technology for Competitive Advantage

This is a national and international project funded by EU/ADAPT and led by a project team based in the VQ Centre of the Open University at Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. It is intended to help small and micro-size businesses face up to the challenges presented by technological change.

Report Author: Dr Roger Jones

Project website: <http://vqcf.open.ac.uk> (44 pages)

3.2 Key Skills: Making Connections between Higher Education and Employment

This is an on-going research project (August 2000 – July 2002) concerned with making connections between identification, development, application and evaluation of higher level key skills in higher education and employment contexts.

Report Author: Linda Hodgkinson

At: The Vocational Qualifications Centre, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes

3.3 Part-time students and employment: Report of a survey of students, graduates and diplomates

This is part of a DFEE study looking at the information needs of Higher Education in relation to the local labour market, and includes surveys of part-time students and graduates. An important implication of the findings relates to the use of employment outcomes to assess the employability of students and the impact of higher education on their careers.

Authors: John Brennan, Jonathan Mills

At: The Quality Support Centre, Open University, Walton Hall

3.4 Evaluating the impact of key skills work in the higher education curriculum

This report aims to evaluate the impact of full integration of key skills in the level one curriculum in higher education with particular reference to the entry level courses in mathematics developed at the Open University.

Author: Linda Hodgkinson,
At: The Vocational Qualifications Centre. Walton Hall, Milton Keynes

3.5 Developing methods to identify and assess aspects of metacognition that facilitate effective learning and performance on Higher Education programmes

The main aim of the research is to develop methods to identify and assess aspects of metacognition, that is, those skills or aspects of learning which facilitate skill transfer or adaptability. The research also aims to identify effective approaches for the development and assessment of key skills in the context of Higher Education programmes and to investigate whether and how continued systematic development of key skills affects performance.

Author: Linda Hodgkinson,
At: The Vocational Qualifications Centre, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes

4. UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

4.1 Competence based Higher Education and the Standards Methodology

Authors: David Bridges, John Elliott & Anne McKee (with contributions from Mary-Lou Holly, Rob Hyland & Franz Kroath)
Published by: School of Education and Professional Development, University of East Anglia (June 1995)
Booklet: 34 pages

This study examines the assessment of professional competence in higher education, and investigates the attitudes which shape the approach of higher education staff towards such assessment. It considers, in the light of such attitudes, the feasibility of applying the Employment Department's standards methodology at NVQ levels 4 and 5 in higher education. It also investigates, by looking at four arenas of professional development and assessment (initial teacher training, medical general practice, engineering and environmental science), the organisational, technical and practical issues already encountered in applying competence based assessment in higher education.

4.2 The Report of the Formative Evaluation of the COMEX Project

Author: Barbara Zamorski (with a contribution by Lewis Jonker)
Published by: School of Education and professional Development, University of East Anglia (March 1995)
Booklet: 38 pages

This is an interim evaluation report on the DfEE funded project 'From Competence to Excellence' (COMEX) – a programme of work-based learning and accreditation, designed to be collaborative venture between the University and regional employers. Drawing on data from HE tutors, COMEX students, local employers (the partner organisations), the workplace tutors, and senior University academics and administrators, the evaluation reports on two areas of inquiry. Firstly, the way in which the project established itself in its opening months, focusing in particular on employers' (partner organisations) perceptions on how well it served their needs, and the perceptions of senior academics in the University who were not involved in the project. And secondly, the perspectives of the first group of students on the two work-based degree programmes developed as part of the project; their reasons for joining it, their expectations and their initial responses. The role and the views of the workplace tutors were also examined.

4.3 The Report of the Summative Evaluation of the COMEX Project

Author: Andrew Marfleet

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) University of East Anglia
(November 1995)

Booklet: 31 pages

This was the second report concerning the above project. As the summative evaluation, it attempts to assess the overall impact of the project as perceived by the employers, the students and the University, and to better understand the features of its planning and delivery which contributed to its successes and its failures. Moreover, it was designed to act as a basis for considering the next stage of this project. Innovative initiatives for the University, such as the introduction of APEL and APL, attempts at utilising workplace assessments as part of degree accreditation, and collaborative partnerships between the University and employers are also reported on.

4.4 Work-based Learning, Accreditation and Professional Development: COMEX -Final report of a Two-year project in Work-based Learning, Accreditation and Professional Development at the University of East Anglia

Author: not named

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) University of East Anglia
(January 1996)

Booklet: 56 pages (including Appendices)

This was the final, and overall, report of the COMEX project. It outlines and describes the context of the project in terms of the eastern region and its economic base, and the changing purposes of higher education in relation to work-based learning and training. The project philosophy, aims and objectives are listed, particularly in terms of the innovatory features of the project (as described in the previous two items), and the two degree programmes developed - the MA and BA degree in Professional Development – are characterised and illustrated. The final section reports on the achievements, lessons and conclusions of the work of COMEX. The Appendices contain a range of documents pertaining to the development of the innovatory features of the project.

4.5 An Appraisal Of the Extent to which Academic assessment can be Designed to Dovetail with Existing NVQ and MCI Assessment Patterns

Author: Jo Frankham

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) University of East Anglia (March 1996)

Booklet: 20 pages

This report, which was produced under contract with the DfE (now the DfEE), is primarily a discussion document. Drawing on a substantial literature base, the discussion centres on questions of academic identity, educational philosophy, the assessment of knowledge, and concerns, which relate to the education and training of professionals. The analysis of the literature is presented through chapters on: Values, philosophy and purpose of HE; Fairness and validity of assessment; Professional issues; and Knowledge issues.

4.6 Initial Investigation Paper: Existing Skills - The Pro-File Project

Author: not named

Published by; University of East Anglia (November 1998)

Booklet: 16 pages plus extensive Appendices

This is a report of a research project conducted jointly by UEA and Essex University. The aim of

the project was to create a framework for under-graduates to monitor their self-development. This initial research paper investigates, through the use of data from both local and national universities, existing research and developmental work on skills identification and profiling, the key/transferrable skills desired by employers, issues of student participation, faculty/staff participation, and the different delivery formats being piloted. The report draws some interim conclusions in order to guide the development of the University's own framework for recording and analysing student skill acquisition. The Appendices, comprising documentation from a number of universities, are useful and interesting in their own right

4.7 Report of the Formative Evaluation of the Learning through Earning Project

Author: Barbara Zamorski

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) UEA/DfEE (July 1999)

Booklet: 33 pages

This report is the formative evaluation of the two year DfEE-funded Learning Through Earning (LTE) project. The project was funded in order to help the University design and pilot an accredited undergraduate student unit which would enhance student employability skills, and help students develop a greater understanding of work and work-place cultures. The research draws on data from students, local employers and University staff. It explores, at an interim stage of the project, the management of the project and the design and curriculum of the new Work-based Learning Unit within a traditional HE academic culture. It also outlines the perspectives towards this trend, and the new Unit, of the three stakeholders noted earlier.

4.8 Report of the Summative Evaluation of the Learning through Earning (LTE) Project

Author: Roger Aspland

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) UEA/DfEE (May 2000)

Booklet: 30 pages

This is the final evaluation of the above project. It is divided into four sections: Managing the Project; Developing the Work-based Learning (WBL) Unit; Future of the WBL Unit; and Conclusions. It suggests that the project has raised a number of crucial issues for University purpose, curricula and infrastructure, and offers 'lessons learnt', which might usefully inform further employability and work-based learning initiatives. The most significant 'lessons' are described under the headings of: Employability and students; Work experience as a vehicle for learning; Enhancing work-based learning; Involving employers; Curriculum issues; Project design; and Project management.

4.9 Using Graduate Skills in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Author: Roy McLarty (now at University of East Anglia)

Published by: School of Business, Management and Technology, University College Suffolk and DfEE (March 1998)

Booklet: 35 pages (including Appendices)

This report summarises the findings resulting from an eighteen month research contract between the DfEE and University College Suffolk. The project was one of a number examining linkages between SME's and graduates. Its specific uniqueness rested on the use of the Internet as the medium used. The three main areas of interest were: the context surrounding Internet usage; the context and impact in relation to graduates; and the contexts and skills required of SME's. A review of the literature was undertaken, and subsequently, data collected from 38 SME managers and 206 graduates was analysed. The findings were grouped into four broad categories: SME Oriented Outcomes, Brokerage Orientated Outcomes, Graduate Orientated Outcomes, and Higher Education Institution Orientated Outcomes. There is also a section on An Internet based Graduate

4.10 Beyond the Sixth Form: a survey of 6th form students in Norfolk

Authors: Jon Gubbay & Lynn Preston

Published by: School of Economic and Social Studies, University of East Anglia (1998)

Booklet: 47 pages

This research investigates and identifies some of the factors impinging on whether sixth form students intend to continue their studies and, if so, what are their personal and vocational aims. 394 students were interviewed for this research, and the findings reported in chapters on: Influences on intentions after leaving school; Perceptions of cost and benefits – and decisions; Selection of courses and higher educational institutions; and Hopes and expectations for the future. In parallel, a small-scale study was carried out with local employers to investigate the match, or mismatch, between the sixth formers employment aspirations and the needs of employers. The concluding section discusses the relationship of employment, higher education and lifelong learning in the context of this research.

4.11 From UEA to Employment: A Survey of 1993 Graduates

Author: Janet Anderson

Published by: Economics Research Centre, University of East Anglia (March 1997)

Booklet: 30 pages plus Appendices of Tables.

This research survey sought information on the career pathways of full-time students who had graduated three years earlier, and investigated the extent to which transferable skills needed in the workplace had been gained while at UEA. The study reports on: the profile of the respondents; student experience since leaving the University; occupational influences, choices and successes; skills needed most in the world of work and how acquired in the University; and student reflections on the University as preparation for employability in retrospect.

4.12 From UEA to Employment Volume II: A Survey of 1995 first degree graduates conducted summer 1998

Author: Janet Anderson

Published by: Economics Research Centre, University of East Anglia (June 1999)

Booklet: 33 pages plus Appendices of detailed tables and data sets.

This second survey was undertaken two years later with the same objectives as the previous one. A slightly modified questionnaire was used, but sufficient questions were retained for comparisons to be made between the two cohorts. As well as reports on the questions and issues surveyed, the differences and similarities between the learning and employment experiences of the 1993 and the 1995 students are outlined and compared.

4.13 The Labour Market and Higher Education: From Information to Understanding

A report for GO-East and the East of England Development Agency

Authors: David Bridges, Tony Brown & Sue Otter

Published by: University of East Anglia and the Government Office for the East of England (not dated)

Booklet: 31 pages (including Appendix)

This report, which was supported by the DfEE Higher Education Development Fund, concerns the relationship between labour market information (LMI) and provision of higher education in the eastern region. It also reports on the poor quality of labour market information available. The

Executive Summary argues that none of the conditions required to satisfy a match between HE provision and labour market needs are being met, and it offers a number of recommendations which might advance the contribution HE could make to meeting regional needs. The Appendix offers a useful list of sources, and some of their features, for labour market information and higher education in the Eastern Region.

4.14 Key Skills in Higher Education – Overview

Author: Geoffrey Hinchcliffe

Available from: G. Hinchcliffe, University of East Anglia (2000)

Paper: 4 pages

This short paper briefly outlines three different approaches to the introduction of key skills into higher education: The Personal and Academic record (PAR) approach, the Capability Curriculum, and the Bottom-Up approach. This is followed by a list of five University website addresses (not local) which have on-line skill development descriptions and/or skill development tools or models.

4.15.1 Young People Achieving their Potential in Rural Norfolk? Final Report

A research study commissioned by the Norfolk Careers Services and conducted by a team from the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia

Authors: Christine O’Hanlon and Maggie Teggin, with Barbara Walker

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education, UEA (January 2001)

ISBN 0 9539983 1 2

Booklet: 52 pages

This report presents the finding of an investigation into the opportunities and barriers that young people in rural Norfolk experience as they make their transition from schooling to work and training. The investigation, which was commissioned by the Careers Services, emerged out of concerns that young people in rural areas may experience specific disadvantages that have a tendency to limit their career choices and restrict their horizons. It specifically focuses on young people who have been identified as having low employability aspirations and not fulfilling their potential.

4.15.2 Young People Achieving their Potential in Rural Norfolk? Executive Summary. A research study commissioned by the Norfolk Careers Services and conducted by a team from the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia

Authors: Christine O’Hanlon and Maggie Teggin, with Barbara Walker

Published by: Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) UEA (January 2001)

ISBN 0 9539983 2 0

Booklet: 8 pages

This Executive Summary documents the main findings of the Final Report (as described above) and offers a number of recommendations for consideration. This, and the above report, was funded by the Norfolk Careers Services.

5. UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

5.1 A Strategy for the Introduction of a Key skills Development and Skills Profiling Programme

Author: Terry Barry

Available from: Terry Barry (Careers Adviser/Pro-File Project Officer) University of Essex
(updated version - November 2000)

Paper: 5 pages (including an Appendix on the York Award)

This short paper summarises the Essex Key Skills Strategy, which aims to enhance student employability and employment experiences. It briefly describes the origins and the arguments for developing this strategy, which drew on the experience of the York Award (developed, piloted and successfully promoted to students by the University of York). The strategy includes the development of an Essex Skills Award (ESA) and a web-based ProFile, which encourages students to audit and prioritise their skill development, and produce a skills development plan. Both strands are based on the six key skills identified by Dearing, CVPV (as was)/DfEE, and the QCA.

6. UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

6.1 Hertfordshire Integrated Learning Project (HILP): Integrating Skills Development with Academic Content in Higher Education (DRAFT)

Authors: Andrew Honeybone (Director of HILP) Jennifer Blumhof (Assistant Director), Marianne Hall, John Palmer

Published by: University of Hertfordshire

File: 70 pages plus Appendices

Much of the information in the information in this file can also be accessed on the Internet through the University Website.

This very substantial file, which is the culmination of three years' work by the HILP team, has been produced as a guide to the work of the Hertfordshire Integrated Learning Project (HILP). It contains nine well-detailed chapters covering the following areas: Introduction to the project; Components of the HILP Integrated Model; The Background to Skills Development in Higher Education; Graduate Skills; The Role of Problem-Based Learning in Skills Development; Transdisciplinary Problem-Based Case Studies; Mapping and Tracking Skills Development; Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation; and The Way Ahead. It also contains a large section of useful Appendices and Figures.

HE Research and the EEDA Skills Agenda

Part Three: Report of the Research Seminar

A research seminar, where the first part of this report was presented and discussed, took place at Madingly Hall, Cambridge University on Wednesday, 28th February.

Participants at the Seminar were:

David Bridges	AUEE
Roger Burdett	EPSRC
Hilary Bryant	GO-East
Lynne Caley	University of Cambridge Programme for Industry
Stella Cottrell	University of Luton

Chris Cox	AUEE
Rachel Highmore	UEA
Andrew Honeybone	University of Hertfordshire
David Lewin	Homerton School of Health Studies
Alison Lys	EEDA
Susan Petty	Anglia Polytechnic University (APU)
Sue Oosthuizen	University of Cambridge
Barbara Zamorski	UEA (CARE)

The seminar began with an introduction to the research project by Professor David Bridges, Executive Director of the Association of Universities of the East of England (AUEE).

This was followed by a report, and group discussion, on the research conducted by Barbara Zamorski (as outlined in the first part of this report).

In the afternoon, three short presentations, from three of the AUEE institutions, were given. These focused on research, strategies and actions that relate to the EEDA skills agenda. In addition to being of interest in their own right, they also acted as a basis for debate.

Presentation One: ‘Skill Development at UEA’ by Rachael Highmore, Key Skills Officer and Employment Liaison Officer at the University of East Anglia

This presentation included:

- an outline description of the development and the advantages of the Matrix project, an on-line skills development programme for students
- a summary of the phases of this development
- a list of the student help available during the project for supporting the IT programme
- student evaluation of the on-line (IT) programme, and the complementary skills workshops, during Phase 1 of the programme
- issues to consider for the future regarding the development and use of Matrix i.e.: students’ motivation; formal validation of evidence of skill development; student management of their own learning; and the role of Matrix in University School or Course curricula.

A copy of the transparencies used during the presentation, offering details of the above areas, is included in Appendix 1.

As a result of the work carried out so far, the Key Skills Team in the University had also identified wider issues and questions which they considered required further research as the Matrix programme was being implemented. For example:

- what are student perceptions and self awareness of key and other skills?
- what impact does skills development have on graduates in employment?
- what kind of skills development should take place in the future – and to what extent should it be driven by the needs of employers or by personal development?

Attempting to develop and initiate what is in effect a change in undergraduate curricula, with insufficient knowledge of exactly what such change constituted, or what its medium to long-term effects might be, the Team consider that research, in parallel with development, should also be in attendance. It was noted though that neither funding nor capacity for such research was currently available, and none planned to be in the foreseeable future.

Presentation Two: Research issues for the future, or “mind the gap” by Stella Cottrell, Director of Lifelong Learning at the University of Luton

A model for skill development was introduced and used as a basis for broaching crucial issues and questions concerning future and potential research issues and capacity. Points made and questions asked included the following:

- **The relationship between employer-identified skills and key skills:** Key questions on this issue were: Do these match? and Do employers (particularly local ones) understand the term in the same way that higher education uses it? Evidence from the group suggested that the terminology of the ‘skills’ discourse is muddy within higher education itself. How this term is then interpreted and understood as either a set of ‘generic’ or ‘key’ skills in different organisational contexts is even more confusing for local and regional employers. A further question is does the promise implicit in such a skills curriculum also mislead employers by suggesting that the particular skills they require will already be fully developed in the undergraduates they decide to employ.
- **Skills required for the future:** It was reported that local employers are increasingly beginning to think about skills that may be required or useful for unpredictable future scenarios, especially when they consider moving into European and international markets. They suggest that these scenarios may require skill education and training which go beyond the currently identified key skills.
- **Identifying and exploiting ambient knowledge:** Returning to the theme of ‘invisible assets’, as reported in the earlier session, it was suggested that there is much ambient local knowledge, which is generated, known about locally, and shared through and by networking and collaboration between the local university and local businesses. This kind of knowledge is rarely documented or disseminated beyond the local networks. Questions here included whether such knowledge should or could be documented, shared and exploited beyond the local community.
- **Community issues:** Following on from the previous point, the extent to which a university regards itself as part of the local community as well as local commerce is important (not that they are necessarily mutually exclusive). Higher Education might see one of its future roles as being part of a local learning community, of which it composes only one strand amongst other learning fora and opportunities. The possibility of a university re-conceptualising its role in longer-term community schemes and as a community resource needs to be considered.
- **New and particular qualifications:** A number of new qualifications and accreditation schemes are now on offer to the lifelong learner, and appear to be proliferating, for example, Foundation Degrees, HND/C, Life Long Learning awards and others to fill continuing professional development gaps. Important questions on qualifications include: Where is the market research for all the new qualifications which Higher Education might offer and cover? Where is the research concerning student and employer needs or desires? Who actually wants these various courses and qualifications? Who will recognise them - in England? in Europe? further afield? And What will they signify in the wider world and what kind of currency will they have?
- **Marking and moderation:** When considering key or generic skills, there are many questions of marking, moderation and transferability to be addressed. For example, will universities in the region be identifying and assessing similar skills and levels of competency? How best can this be assured? Also, the concept of transferability needs to be unpacked and explored. For example, what exactly is being transferred - Between universities (concerning issues of moderation or credit transfer for example)? Between university and work place? Could life skills be enhanced and used in academic courses, or skills developed through an academic course be easily utilised in employment? How does the principle of transferability really work in practice?

- **Different and particular cohorts:** Inevitably succeeding the issue of different qualifications, there are questions of different courses and curricula in higher education. The group debated questions such as: Will there be a regional role for certain curricula? Will there be different curricula for vocational education? for international students? for students who come through widening participation (WP) routes? for Curriculum 2000? for mature/third age students? What kind of skills are needed and desired by different kinds of cohorts? And if distinct curricula is developed and offered for these different, and possible, discrete cohorts, how will this managed in a coherent manner with regard to transfer of teaching, learning and accreditation?
- **The demand side – understanding the market:** The key question on this point is understanding, providing for and monitoring what the current and future regional requirements for courses are. It was suggested that as the Creditlink East database develops, this would offer a possible framework for regional coherence and monitoring for learning and courses. It would also help identify market demand and learning gaps. It would not be able to address all issues though, such as regional exodus, for example.

It was noted, again, that many major issues need to be researched but that there is little research capacity address any of them.

Presentation Three: The Hertfordshire Integrated Learning Project (HILP) by Andrew Honeybone, Director of HILP at the University of Hertfordshire:

The origins and development of the three year HILP project were described in some detail. This included:

- The background, context and rationale for the programme, which advocated and advanced the integration of skills development with academic content in the University
- Early research and findings from staff interviews
- The underling pedagogy of HILP
- The Graduate Skills Menu
- A summary of the HILP approach to problem-based learning (PLB)

This was followed by a presentation of a preliminary evaluation of a problem-based case study using this explicit/ embedded approach to skills development in higher education curricula. Versions 1 and 2 of the Broadland Case Study were used to identify, demonstrate and explore the major findings and issues.

The Broadland Case Study has now been placed on the Internet, and offers both case study resources and skill resources. The next steps for HILP include:

- further evaluation work
- development of case study work
- incorporation of the work so far into the overall Managed Learning Environment for the University in order to facilitate a more co-ordinated and progressive approach to skills development.

This is a major and ambitious project, the fine-grained detail of which has proved to be, so far, extremely valuable as both research and resource for HEIs. A copy of the transparencies used during the presentation is included in Appendix 2. These offer further details from the above presentation.

Discussion and Plenary

It was clear that seminar participants were aware of other relevant research in their own institutions that had been publicly documented and/or published. The annotated bibliography included in this report, as surmised, was proved to be partial. Questions of how all relevant research is identified, placed on a regional data base, and easily accessed are key for the future, important both as a baseline for identifying gaps and as well as gaining an accurate overview of research and activity within and across the eastern

region.

The research report and the presentations identified many issues, most of which were pertinent to the individual eastern region universities as well as EEDA. Many points were made and discussed but the key theme around which they coalesced concerned the one of knowledge management. Knowledge management is not only of course about identifying, accessing and bringing together information and knowledge, crucial though that is. It is also about transmuted knowledge into intelligence, thus generating new information and understanding in order to inform future thinking and research. It is the synthesised information, acting with and on current economic scenarios that can shed light on and guide future action. It was suggested during the seminar that by improved and more systematic exploitation of:

- the increasing significance of evidence-based practice in many professional contexts,
- the role that higher education plays in collecting and producing evidence about the relationships between evidence and policy, and evidence of the impact and consequences of initiatives, and
- the collaboration between universities and colleges and local and regional organisations

could help transform information into intelligence and understanding.

More specific issues and questions were also identified:

- How do the research projects conducted under targeted programmes initiating and sponsoring skill development and employability fit in a) with each other, and b) with the individual and the national/international research agendas, programmes and projects taking place in the different departments of individual universities? For example, the Skills Development Fund (SDF) offers over four million pounds 'to help meet the priority skill needs identified by labour market intelligence and to contribute to regional economic development by improved skill provision'. How does the research this sponsorship targets build on, dovetail in with, overlap with, complement or inform other research or projects on skill development and employment?
- Projects can and do continue to develop after the end of their formal funding period. Project evaluations are often co-terminus with the end of a project, but rarely follow through after any significant periods of time in order to investigate the long-term consequences (hoped for or otherwise). These could include changes such as new appointments or roles in university personnel, or act as the basis for further funding bids, to continue or to develop work started. Therefore short-term projects can develop and gradually build up to new initiatives, and can be significant factors in incremental change. Research in these areas would be of value.
- Information on integration and sustainability in universities on EEDA-related initiatives needs to be more thoroughly researched. The issue about embedding skill development within Faculties or Schools of the HEIs is a particularly crucial but complex one.
- The language of skills still needs much work. The understanding, development and use of a 'skill' can be distinct in particular contexts. For example, the understanding and use of a named skill in an academic context is not necessarily the same in an industrial or business organisation context. Even in these kinds of organisations, the same named skill will mean something very different in different parts and levels of an organisation.
- Bringing HE research into the wider skills arena would be of value to the whole region and the 'skills mismatch' debate.
- A key issue for the future of the region would be provision for coherent, complete and progressive routes through the skills agenda.
- Those outside of the HE institutions reported that an understanding of the complex and complicated

nature of HEIs was important when attempting to build closer and partially symbiotic relationships with universities. It was suggested that understanding and working with such complexity in a beneficial manner was important for EEDA, and that EEDA take more of a lead role in giving HEIs and their research, including 'invisible assets and ambient knowledge' a higher profile. Also, that EEDA embed this element more closely into their future work.

- It was suggested that AUEE might consider a closer relationship with other personnel in the universities as well as with Pro-Vice Chancellors and formal contact points. It could help set up cross-institutional networks, or support and formalise some of the current informal networks already working in these areas. In '*changing and problematic times*' it was suggested by a participant '*we can support each other as institutions and people ... networking and collaboration will probably benefit all of us. Competition should not be a problem as we are so diverse – we should complement each other.*'
- It would be useful for AUEE and EEDA to identify and implement some practical mechanisms and strategies in order to ensure a regular, systematic regional approach to effective future co-ordination of HE research and R&D.
- EEDA would probably find it of value to look at research and development not only inside its own region but also beyond the region, and to examine the relationship between the two.
- Specific recommendations made at the end of the plenary were that:
 - EEDA and AUEE should look for a way to way to extend, maintain and develop the research begun and reported on in this task.
 - The research would be reported and held in electronic form (on the AUEE website to begin with).
 - It would be linked to other appropriate websites.
 - Knowledge management needs to be taken further than collecting and holding information. Ways of doing so need to be worked out at a regional level.

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