Workplace Learning for Faculty Professionals in the Changing Thai University Context: A Case Study of Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus

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Declaration of authorship

I formally declared that this thesis has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for any other academic award. The work submitted is less than 60,000 words.

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Signed date

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ONEC Office of the National Education Commission

SPU Sripatum University

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Abstract

This study investigated the workplace learning of faculty staff at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus, Thailand. It is set in the context of significant change in Thai education and government

legislation to improve the quality and standards of education at all levels. The aim was to improve teaching performance and to develop a model for workplace learning and the improvement of teaching quality in the university.

The study was conducted in two phases: the first involved a survey of all campus staff asking what aspects of teaching have improved, what sources of help contributed to their teaching improvement and what they would like to improve in future and how this might be achieved.

The second phase represented both an action phase and the trial of a change strategy. It involved the selection of 6 staffs from those willing to participate, covering the range of teaching disciplines, and ranges of teaching experience. Staff met regularly once or twice per month as an action learning set, to examine each individual's learning experience and to offer support and critique. Data were collected through observation, field notes, individual journals, and through faculty documents. Three cycles were completed following which an evaluation was conducted based on group and individual interviews. The data are presented through narrative and through interpretation of the development of learning and the effectiveness of the process. Data were also used to construct a model of workplace learning for Sripatum University.

Survey and action learning results indicated that effective lecturers' workplace learning encompass both formal an informal approaches for supporting ongoing lecturer learning. Participation in on the job learning and reflection and discussion with colleagues were most valued as an effective contribution to learning in the workplace. The workplace learning model of lecturers' development to improve teaching is a mediated process of learning focusing on the integration of practical and theoretical knowledge, classroom practice and professional dialogue with colleagues. In the current Thai higher education context and context of Sripatum University, the workplace learning model can also be described as a process of professional socialization wherein lecturers and their colleagues share understanding, purposes and values as well as build interdependencies that complement or supplement the formal learning of university.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Rationale

With the increasingly rapid rate of change in today's workplace has come an increasing need to establish innovative ways to prepare employees to meet these challenges. The explosion in the field of knowledge and information technology has paved the way for new learning environments and the emerging new learners. The introduction of new environments has created a need for workers with an expanded range of skills. Employees are required, now more than ever, to learn continuously in the workplace to ensure their continued competitiveness.

Many organizations have been encouraging both formal and informal learning to help both the organization and its members "ride the waves of change". That is seen to encompass many forms of learning. Workplace learning is becoming a major force in the initial and ongoing education of today's employees (Billet, 1995).

In a rapidly changing environment, universities inevitably are also changing. Higher education is faced with new challenges to connect people to the learning process in new and different ways. So, consciously, the academic roles of teaching, research and community service became embedded in the new learning environment.

The university needs a corporate culture that is open to change, a culture in which learning, quality, and excellence are highly valued, and in which acquiring skills is considered a lifelong process and the means to cope with continuous or radical change.

Teaching is the facilitation of learning for change and of problem-solving in unknown situations. Research and development becomes a collaborative, practice-oriented

approach, leading toward a more open environment of collaboration and of lifelong learning (Angelo, 1994).

1.2 Thai Higher Education Context

The 1999 National Education Act serves as a basis for the education reform of Thailand, including higher education. Higher education reform aims to achieve the following goals (ONEC, 2000):

1. To provide a central and unified mechanism of policy formulation and integration, planning, budget allocation and evaluation, in the body of the new Ministry.
2. To improve access to and participation in higher education.
3. To achieve academic excellence, requisite standards and quality assurance.
4. To manage with autonomy and flexibility.
5. To mobilize resources from various sectors.
6. To balance the development of intellect and ethics of Thai graduates with desirable attributes of physical and mental strength.

Higher education reform promotes novel curricula and mechanisms for teaching and learning. This is to ensure flexibility and diversification to meet the demand of individual learners, and dynamic national requirements. The adoption of learning innovation and information technology are featured prominently. The underlining principle of learner-centred education, central to the education reform, will be observed at higher education level. Analytical skills, critical thinking and learning motivation are key attributes of the new era. Moreover, management of higher education institutions places importance on research and accumulation of knowledge and technology for development of the nation.

Capabilities of higher education institutions to carry out internal assessment and evaluation of academic and management performance are strengthened. This will lead to improved education quality. Moreover, it reflects the accountability of the higher education system to the public.

Pursuant to the discussion above, an internal quality assurance mechanism has been set up within each institution. A national body mandated to undertake external quality assurance as stipulated by the 1999 National Education Act is established. This agency will be in charge of the external evaluation of all educational institutes, from primary to tertiary levels.

1.3 Historical Background

Sripatum University, one of the oldest private universities in Thailand, was established by Dr. Suk Pookayaporn on May 28, 1970. On April 1, 1987, the university was expanded to Chonburi Province. At present, Sripratum University Chonburi Campus has expanded academic services and facilities: academic programs offered are Business Administration, Accounting, Law, Informatics, Liberal Arts and Communication Arts.

- Development of Learning and Teaching

The university places importance on creating an academic environment that is conducive to learning at the university level. There is a state-of-the-art library and a well-equipped Piyachart Multi-Media Center that provides resources for self-learning and professional development in the film and broadcasting industry.

The university places the highest priority on recruiting qualified instructors. A faculty member in an undergraduate program must earn a masters degree from an accredited university and must have the necessary instructional skill and professional experience to teach, guide and supervise students in learning and extra-curricula activities. Lecturers at the postgraduate level must have professional experience and a doctoral degree.

The university encourages faculty members to further their education by providing scholarships for masters and doctoral studies both in Thailand and abroad. As of June

2002, there are more than 100 faculty members awarded scholarships furthering their education in higher learning institutions across USA, UK, Australia, and Thailand.

Faculty members and staff are also encouraged to take part in training and seminars and to conduct research. This is to encourage university personnel to update their knowledge and set a good example to students in professional development.

- Development of Student Activities

The university realizes that academic knowledge and ability alone cannot bring success. Therefore, the university encourages students to participate in extra-curricula activities to ensure that they have the opportunities to develop social skills such as the ability to coordinate, to provide leadership, to utilize creativity and to enhance interpersonal skills. This is to prepare students to face the real world and to give them a firm foundation for personal development.

- Development of Technology and Educational Media

The university is continuously deploying appropriate technology and developing media for educational purposes. It is the directive of the university to encourage the use of information technology in all the courses to prepare students for the IT-enabled society. Moreover, information technology is used to assist the work of administrators, lecturers and staff so that they can perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

Currently, the university has initiated the e-Learning development project that aims to create an open learning campus and expand academic services to give students a flexible learning environment. To further facilitate the access to information throughout the campus, the university has developed a wireless LAN system that covers all main areas so that students can access the university knowledge servers and internet wherever they are at SPU campus.

Sripatum University is a private university and clearly declared a policy of quality assurance in 1997 by publishing a quality assurance manual. After that the organization management was changed in order to achieve the quality assurance criteria.

In 2002, the university started to seriously implement the quality assurance system. From this time, it has impacted on all staff across the hierarchy particularly the faculty staff, whose major responsibilities have to be both teaching and research (Office of the National Education Commission 1999). Their responsibilities are an important part of quality education that has an effect on students' achievement and quality of graduates.

From its inception until the present, the University has produced graduates to serve Thai society. Sripatum University has developed its education services and other resources to meet social and economic changes in Thailand in order to assist the nation in developing human resources with knowledge, ability, skills and a sense of social responsibility and consciousness.

1.4 The Context of Study

The economic, political, cultural and social crisis has caused all concerned to realize the need for the reform of Thai education. That led to the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels.

As my workplace, Sripatum University is dedicated to the preparation of the learners to meet the challenges of this rapidly changing world. The organization's management was changed in order to achieve the quality criteria. The university started to be serious about the implementation of a quality assurance system. It will enter a new era by launching a network linking three campuses as a distance or e-learning system. Students at Sripatum can take advantage of advanced information technology , allowing them to interact with lecturers and this will mean more efficient work procedures for staff on three campus's. A professional studies and continuing education centre has been developed to provide a quality education with a focus on international standards, practical

application and degree outcomes. The instructional development was designed to deliver the theories, skill and abilities beyond the degree at each level. The advanced technologies were provided as the tool for successful development. At the time of the research, Chonburi Campus offered 6 degree program at the undergraduate level and 3 degree programs at postgraduate level. There were 6 faculties, namely the faculties of Accounting, Business Administration, Communication Arts, Informatics, Law and Liberal Arts.

The main building has 14 storeys. It houses the administrators, conference rooms, offices and 50 lecture rooms equipped with modern teaching and learning equipment and media. There is also a multimedia library and a self-learning centre.

I am a lecturer at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus. I undertook this research as part of a pilot project in action research and action learning for faculty development in teaching. I acted as both facilitator of the action learning team and as researcher using this research as part of my enrolment in an overseas doctoral programme at Victoria University, Australia and for further development in faculty learning on my campus.

In relation to the project members, I was more senior to some lecturers but less senior to others. This project was supported by the vice-president, a factor in boosting my status. The lecturers were invited to participate in an action learning programme regarding their recent professional development experiences and their willingness to be a team member. The outcomes of the project did not have any effects on their appraisal.

1.5 Changes in the Academic Profession

Changes impact on all staff across the hierarchy particularly the faculty staff, whose major responsibilities are an important part of quality education that affects students' achievement and graduate quality. Retallick (1993) mentioned that the factors which are believed to be the major pre-requisites for effective education are: teacher quality and

quality of teaching. The reasons for improving teaching are found in four different yet interconnected areas. They are reasons related to:

1) institutions of higher education,
2) faculty members,
3) students, and
4) society and societal forces (Seldin, 1993).

The changing circumstances of higher education and in my workplace have altered the characteristics of new learning experiences. They are having a dramatic impact on the faculty, leading to changes in the continuing education of faculty professionals. Over the next decade, the university will be deeply involved in improving teacher learning. There are some formal training programs and degree programs that provide professional preparation but they are neither required by, nor available to, all faculty. Professional development is usually associated with attending formal courses or conferences, seminars or workshops. As they are currently implemented, most university staff development programs provide faculty with only a few days each year of professional growth opportunities. The resultant learning may or may not be directly relevant to professional experience.

Lecturers need continuous learning opportunities if they are to optimize learning and career development for their students. Faculty professionals are adult learners and they bring to their workplace an established body of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Adult learners need to relate new learning to their careers and classroom experience; they need to evaluate new idea contexts as well. They also need support both from within the organization and from outside the organization, and they need a sense of control. They learn best by being helped to create a sense of ownership of their learning (Foley, 1995). Given the turbulent environment in which the employee must function and the high stakes involved, it is seen as critical to examine just how this learning may occur. This knowledge should help organizations minimize risk, overcome problems and help individuals to more effectively handle change (Andresen et al. 1995).

Academics' workplace learning is viewed as an essential component of their overall professional development. Workplace learning is an emerging field that encompasses theory relative to training, development and education in the workplace, for the individual and management in the organization as a whole. This research focuses on the role that workplace learning plays in the continuing education of academics - how they should go about learning, what they have to learn and the conditions of workplace learning. It involves an action research investigation into how workplace learning can contribute to the improvement of teaching at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus. The action research set out to investigate how faculty had used workplace learning previously and the value of an action learning set in developing professional practice.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Workplace learning with reference to a review of related literature and to my knowledge and experience, can be summarized as follows: the means, processes, and activities by which employees learn in the workplace, from basic skills to high technology and management practices that are immediately applicable to workers' jobs, duties and roles; the learning can be formal, non-formal, incidental, or experiential, with an emphasis on self-directed learning. Outcomes should be the development of employee knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and actions in relation to the workplace environment.

Faculty is used to denote academic members of staff of a university.

Workplace learning is the key factor and an essential element in the personal and professional development of employees. It is the major means by which they improve their work; and it is a key strategic element in achieving organizational objectives and goals, leading directly to enhanced competitive advantage.

The study highlights the potential of the workplace - in the case of faculty staff, the university - as a site for faculty's learning and professional development.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This review informs the framework for this research by focusing on research in the field of contemporary workplace learning, faculty workplace learning, and teaching improvement in higher education.

2.1 The Appeal of Workplace Learning

There are several reasons for the increasing popularity of workplace learning in general. Learning should be situated within the context of practice (Lave & Wenger, Resnick, and others; referred to in Smith, 2003); workplaces provide a fertile opportunity for learners to appropriate knowledge that connects theory to practice in a realistic and efficient way (Billett, 1996). These arguments all derive from the concern about effective transfer to the workplace of knowledge developed in education and training institutions (Billett, 1996; Van Woerkom, 2003). Eraut, Alderton, Cole and Senker (1998) found that the workplace is a major source for learning while formal education and training contribute to only a small proportion of learning at work.

2.2 The Nature of Workplace Learning

It is stating the obvious to say that workplace learning is one of a number of terms used to describe learning which is in some way related to the workplace. Even so this could incorporate one or more of the following features depending on the writer's, or educator's 'definition-in-use': individuals learning from their experiences at work (informal learning) individuals learning from formal training conducted in their organizations; individuals learning through one-on-one tuition on the job; individuals or groups of people learning incidentally from their experiences at work, through some process the main focus of which was not necessarily learning (or learning of the type

intended) (Marsick & Watkins, 1990); a group of people, or a team, learning from their experiences as a group ('group learning' or 'team learning'); and the organization learning and changing its practices, as a consequence of the collective insight of members of that organization, particularly following a crisis situation (organizational learning) (Field, 1990, 1995).

The salient and common feature of all the usages, however, is that learning occurs in a particular context, namely the context of the workplace. Various critical writers have chosen to emphasize the centrality of context to our understanding of the issues by using terms such as the 'workplace as a learning environment' (Welton, 1991; Billett, 1995) or the 'educative work environment' (Kornbluh & Greene, 1989).

Holliday (1998, Module 2) referred to workplace learning as:

> *The processes and outcomes to learning that individual employees and groups of employees undertake under the auspices of a particular workplace. Both the processes and outcomes of learning involve changes in the meanings that individuals and all employees apply to their workplace; learning in the workplace involves changes in feelings and value, knowledge and understandings, and skills that have relevance for a particular workplace. Workplace learning comes about as a result of individual and groups of employees being both willing and able to satisfy individual, group and whole workplace needs through autonomous self-direction, supported and tempered by workplace co-operation.*

Workplaces can be defined as arenas of activity in which socioculturally determined practice occurs. This practice is shaped by the complex factors of the particular workplace, referred to as an activity system (Engestrom, 1993). Individuals construct knowledge through guided engagement in the goal-directed activities of the practice. Learning occurs through engagement in routine and non-routine activities (problem-solving) which are influenced by a particular community of practice. As the exigencies of

the particular workplace provide goals (what is or is not acceptable performance) and activities (shaped by the activity system), these socially determined contributions have cognitive consequences. In this way, working is learning (Billett, 1993c). Beyond engagement in everyday workplace activities, other social factors also influence the construction of knowledge.

2.3 Workplace Learning Processes

Workplace learning processes can include experience-based learning (Andreson et al. in Foley (ed), 1995; Usher, 1993), incidental and informal learning (Marsick, 1990; Foley, 1995), problem-based learning (Chappell et al. in Foley, 1995), self-directed learning (Foley, 1995) as well as a shift to group or organizational learning (Field & Ford, 1996). Learning at the workplace can be enhanced by maximizing the types of activities and processes teams can participate in during their daily work. Furthermore, "with the increased specialization of workplace knowledge…the enterprise may be the best (perhaps only) site to develop that specialized knowledge". (Billett in Boud & Garrick, 1999, p.152).

While the work of Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) has some obvious links with experience-based learning, as well as with other reflection theorists, it is certainly distinctive enough to warrant separate treatment. One reason for this is that confronted by the sheer complexity and diversity of the factors that can influence workplace learning, Argyris and Schon have responded by placing their emphasis on particular factors that they believe are especially influential in workplace learning. For instance, they highlight the importance of non-routine circumstances for stimulating significant workplace learning. They suggest that it is the non-routine that forces workers into the kind of reflective thinking that changes beliefs, values and assumptions. They characterise such learning as 'double loop' in contrast to 'single loop' learning in which a problem is solved using the worker's existing system of beliefs, values and assumptions. Argyris and Schon have also investigated the types of organisational climate that are conducive to

double loop learning. In doing so, they draw attention to the notion of professional judgement and the means by which it is formed.

Illeris' definition appears to be even more comprehensive in asserting that human learning is a highly complex matter that always comprises three different dimensions (Illeris, 2002, p.9). These dimensions are the cognitive, emotional and the social process. Two different but integrated processes are involved: the internal acquisition process and the external interaction process between the learner and the material and social environment. Illeris discusses, criticises, summarises and adapts learning theories and aspects from researchers such as Vygotsky (1978) on social cognition to Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) who inquiried into situated learning and community of practice, in order to reach a coherent overall theory.

The term "workplace learning" embraces a significant shift in contemporary human resource development and adult education theory. It encompasses initial training programs but also and more importantly, targets learning at all organizational levels and in more diverse ways (Boud & Garrick, 1999). Examples of other workplace learning activities may therefore include: mentoring, coaching, pilot project work, staff meetings, learning groups, agency visits, staff swapping, job rotation, consultants, in services, work shadowing, reflective practices. Watkins and Marsick (1993) indicated there are many different types of workplace learning opportunities: consultants, tuition reimbursement programs, in-house training programs, external continuing education programs, self-directed learning programs, quality teams, study teams, and more so that the amount spent both on the providers of this education and workers for time spent learning is staggering.

Revealing workplace learning processes can be a challenging effort, because it is believed that a considerable part of this learning is of an informal, tacit nature. How can informal learning be defined?. As Van Woerkom (2003) points out, informal or non-formal learning appears to be defined by what it is not. It is not learning the subject to a prescribed framework; it is not accredited and there are no teachers present (Eraut, 2000).

It is expected that a large part of workplace learning is informal learning. In the literature, the perspective on this learning ranges from ‘strong tacit’ to ‘uncomplicated’. This concerns the question whether ‘tacitness’ is dependent on the knowledge or on the learner. According to the strong tacit view (Lahn, 2003) some knowledge cannot be revealed. In order to become alert to this kind of learning and knowledge, the following characteristics need to be taken into account:

- Personal learning mostly occurs through observation and imitation or is taught by demonstration. So the interaction processes involved are experience (which includes perception and transmission) and explicit imitation, but may also include activity and participation.

- Learning is integrated with daily routines (at work) (Marsick & Watkins, 2001).

- Learning is mostly not highly conscious (Marsick & Watkins, 2001).

Beyond engagement in every workplace activities, other social factors also influence the construction of knowledge. The studies of workplace learning report that the direct and indirect guidance of social sources and partners to influence the construction of knowledge (Ballenden, 1996; Billet, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996; Harris & Volet, 1996, 1997; Harris et al. 1996a, 1996b; Owen, 1995; Volkoff, 1996). The direct guidance of others (experts and peers) provides models, mentors and clues about performance. Indirect guidance provided by other workers (e.g. comparing, listening and observing, Harris et al. 1996a) and the physical environment (the workplace, its tools etc., Scribner, 1985a) grants access to knowledge through the provision of models, clues, and goals. This type of guidance emphasises a contribution to learning that is unlikely to be provided through text books or through engagement in non-authentic activities.

What truly distinguishes informal learning from formal learning is that it is embedded in the working process and is not explicitly guided by the teacher or school assignments. Typical outcomes of informal learning concern socialisation and participation,

competencies, such as ‘understanding and working effectively in a team’ (Callahan, 1999; referred to in Marsick & Watkins, 2001); and there are many other areas of informal learning outcomes such as 'understanding of situations at work; ‘interpersonal skills’ and ‘understanding of self’. Eraut, Alderton, Cole and Senker's study (1998) shows that these, among others, were categories of learning-at-the-workplace-outcomes, and a survey with a large Community College's staff (Nijhof & Poortman, workshop report 2003) showed that these categories of outcomes are indeed the result of informal learning. Hence, these results possibly overlap with formal attainment targets.

Workplace learning has emerged as a significant site of adults’ informal experiential learning, with implications for the provision and shape of formal education (Beckett & Hager, 2000). They show how to characterize a new epistemology of practice through both empirical and conceptual innovation, and thus advance the detail of this new informal workplace learning. This epistemology deals with five characteristics central to lifelong learning, namely: the contingent (rather than exclusively formal, sustained, and systematic studies); the practical (rather than exclusively the theoretical); the process (rather than exclusively the assimilation of content); the particular (rather than the exclusively the universal and a priori as the ‘context’); and the affective and the social domains (rather than exclusively the cognitive the domain).

These five characteristics are features of life experience itself, so could be expected to feature in accounts of learning in the workplace, since workers spend so much time and energy undergoing experiences at work.

By inquiring of busy professionals what it is they find themselves doing at work, in the midst of the ‘hot action’, Beckett (1996) identified the use of “masterful judgement”. This is taken to be significant in the light of the renewed interest in workplace learning, particularly in its informal manifestations (Garrick, 1998; Hager, 1998; Boud & Garrick, 1999).

One of the clear findings of this work is that an unusually large number of variables influence workplace learning (Hager, 1997b). Such variables include:

- the workplace environment / culture;
- authentic learning experiences;
- quality of learning materials;
- role of language and literacy; and
- company / business size.

Beckett and Hager (2002) are also convinced that making judgements is a central holistic workplace activity that is the expression of practice-based informal learning from work. Judgements provide a powerful way to make sense of the practice-based informal learning.

The main features of practice-based workplace informal learning, are as follows:

- Practice-based informal workplace learning is organic / holistic.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is contextual.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is activity- and experience-based.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning arises in situations where learning is not the main aim.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is activated by individual learners rather than by teachers / trainers.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is often collaborative / collegial.

In this view, learning changes both learners and their environment and learners are part of that environment. The outcome of learning according to this theory is the creation of new set of relations in an environment.

Several educational ideas point the way to an emerging paradigm of learning. These ideas are Dewey's contribution (referred in Hickman, 1998), the role of action in learning

(Jarvis, 1992), insights from Wittgenstein (in detail by Williams 1994); and the capacities presupposed by learning (according to Passmore 1980). The main characteristics of the emerging paradigm of learning have connections with the main features of practice-based workplace informal learning and judgements. However, the newer emerging paradigm also incorporates the standard paradigm rather than discarding it entirely. Thus, there is no rejection of propositional knowledge rather this knowledge is viewed as important components of the mix that underpins judgements (Beckett & Hager, 2002).

2.4 A Model for Understanding Workplace Learning

Marsick and Watkins (1990) mentioned that a model for understanding workplace learning includes three domains of perspective transformation. First of all, instrumental learning is job focused and is aimed at skill development or improving individual productivity. This learning is behaviouristic and the focus of much human resource development. It relies on the assumption that skills can be isolated from their social context. Second, dialogic learning includes learning about the organization and one's relationship to it. It encourages individuals to enter into a dialogue with the organization though emphasis on team relationships, coaching, mentoring, role modeling, and the mission of the organization. Finally, self-reflective learning seeks to extend one's understanding of oneself in the workplace through confidence and competence, dealing with issues of authority and changes in personal values or beliefs and one's orientation toward the job. Watkins (1991) suggests that the logical extension of this process is for workers to engage in a political struggle. Critical reflection and political involvement are two attributes of the embryonic "workplace democracy concept".

Kornbluh and Greene (1989) stated that the concepts of learning applied to a workplace model include three propositions:

(a) non-formal educational processes are potentially powerful tools for developing an educative work environment;
(b) andragogical learning and empowerment theory can be adapted to the workplace; and
(c) this learner-centred approach can help us to build worker learning possibilities into our organizational designs.

Beckett (2001) conducted research in a Dementia unit and found powerful adult learning and the ingredients of a judgement-driven model of workplace learning which were:

- a community of practice (that is authentic, embodied, organic work);
- a dynamic (Aristotelian means-ends) engagement with diversity, power and a variety of discourses;
- a context which is well integrated with the wider environment.

A model of workplace learning via judgments that is proposed for this research builds on the work of Lipman (1991) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) as well as that of Dewey (1916), in that it focuses on the whole lived experiences of workers, not merely their skills, attitudes, and outcomes of these (referred to in Beckett & Hager, 2002). In this sense, the research is based on an organic logic of action. Such experiences of working life are manifest in daily practices, particularly in decisions where the worker is caught up in and expresses those decisions in what can be called 'hot action' (Beckett, 1996). These experiences are typically judgmental in that a series of actions issue from deliberations over 'what to do next' when faced with the usual routines and contingencies across the working day.

In these judgments, individuals 'attend' to their total perceptions of their workplace: cognitive (reason-based), affective (feelings, wants) and social (group and team allegiances) dimensions of these perceptions are only artificially separable. They want to maintain the integrated, organic nature of these perceptions, so that their (literal) 'integrity' is the focus of the empirical investigation of practical judgments. Action

learning can be described in a number of ways, but generally it is a type of learning-through-doing that involves participants in reflecting on their experience. The terms 'action learning' and 'action research' are frequently used interchangeably. Both approaches have been widely adopted and documented in various sectors such as business (Parkes, 1998; Koo, 1999), nursing (Rayner, Chisholm & Appleby, 2002) and education (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Action learning will be discussed further in Chapter 3. The properties of action learning also clarify its relevance to workplace learning (Beaty et al, 1993):

- Learning is based on the solution of real problems.
- Learning occurs with and from others who are also engages in managing real problem.
- Members of group are responsible for solving their own problems, unlike those on a project team or task force.
- Members of group are concerned with implementing actions, moving beyond the stages of analysis and recommendation.

Action learning is now accepted as an effective form of professional development. The case for action learning in the tertiary sector is well published (Kember, 2000; Tjabane, 2003).

2.5 Thai Higher Education Context

Thai higher education reform promotes new curricula and mechanisms for teaching and learning. This is to ensure flexibility and diversification to meet the demand of individual learner, and dynamic national requirements. Adoption of learning innovation and information technology feature prominently. Through the educational reform, the new approach to teaching and learning is the student-centred approach, specifically project and group-based activities. This was selected because it provided a significant shift away from the traditional teacher-centred approach (ONEC, 2000, p.39).

Paitoon (2002) stated that the declaration of the National Education Act in 1999 can be regarded as a very significant turning point in Thai education because it was not only a change in philosophy of education but also in the methods of delivery and management. The purpose of education, according to the Act, is not only enabling the learners to work for society but also to be complete human beings.

For the teaching process, the Act stated that the student-centred concept should be applied to every level of education in Thai educational institutions. They should also have an internal evaluation system and have to be evaluated by an external evaluation organization every five years. Therefore, it is essential to have processes to encourage the faculty to know and understand the concepts and activities of teaching, the nature and the goal of higher education, the characteristics of university students, and the techniques, procedures and basic steps of teaching (Weimer, 1990). Besides, the student's perspective must be considered, and effective teaching can only be understood from the context of the teaching-learning transaction. This view is supported by Ramsden (1992) who has argued that the best approach to improving teaching is by studying students' learning.

The complex demand of today's classroom, the impact of new knowledge on the craft of teaching, the expanding expectations of the community as to the role of university - these and other factors impinging on teachers make it necessary for them simultaneously to be both teachers and learners throughout their teaching careers.

Besides local imperatives as mentioned above, changes in the international scene such as the new expectations of industrialists and manufacturers of higher education, and the increasing trend toward internationalization have significantly influenced higher education in general and staff development in particular (Brew, 1995; Nicholls, 2001).

This new Thai law along with the impact of international trends brought changes to higher education institutions. It also led to new academic development activities. Thus, staff development in Thailand entered a new era.

Paitoon (2000) also noted that activities for faculty development should be varied to serve various aptitudes and interests of instructors at the same time, especially activities which enable the instructors to study, learn and understand by themselves because their nature is to be interested in their particular contents, to study profoundly and solely in their own major.

2.6 Faculty Development and Teaching Development

The academic community is assaulted by a variety pressures that make significant demands. Ramsden describes this simply as 'external forces on higher education' (1998, p.105). Academics' perceptions of these external forces, and their expectations for dealing with them, can produce a huge amount of pressure on individuals and academic departments. Universities acknowledge these forces and often incorporate them into their strategic plans, which then filter down to the 'ordinary' academic as an increase in their workload.

Paitoon (2000) has shown that faculty development in Thailand could be divided into 3 main period: the beginning periods, the expanding period and the revising period.

The Beginning Period (1975–1980) saw the starting point of faculty development, with emphasis on the development of the ability and quality of faculty members this was stimulated by academics out of the country who were aware of the problems and demands of higher education institutions in the country. As a result, there was extensive implemention in the form of working units and committees. The outstanding activities in this period were seminars and workshops in order that faculty members could learn, understand and practise different aspect of teaching in.

The Expanding Period (1981-1986), saw the scope of faculty development activities broaden. Besides an increase in knowledge, teaching plans, techniques and various teaching methods through conferences and seminars, publication of academic papers

about knowledge of teaching also increased. Additionally, topics concentrated more on the evaluation of teaching.

As well as the evaluation of teaching, research, the use of computer, the use of teaching aids, textbook and academic paper writing, all gained more attention. Thus, the scope of faculty development widely expanded together with activities and academic content which had already expanded to a great extent. Through the 5 years of the second period activities in faculty development were enormously enlarged.

The Revising Period (1987-1990) covered more than a decade in which faculty development grew and activities extended their scope and procedures. However, some doubts led to the 1986 evaluation and the revision of the roles and the direction for faculty development.

During this time, there were extensive arguments and discussions about the problems and obstacles of faculty development and after that many universities analyzed, revised and sought new alternatives.

The three major periods were followed by a period of stagnation, (1990-1999) during which many universities slowed down the pace of activities for staff development. There were at least four reasons for this slow down: one was the problem of finance; the second was the changing roles of the academic staff, who emphasized research and academic works; the third was the limitations of educational development which was then still practised in the old way; and the last was the move to change university status from a bureaucratic system to an autonomous one, which caused anxiety to university staff.

The New Direction Period (1999-present), followed the declaration of National Education Act in 1999, which can be regarded as a very significant turning point in Thai education. This new law along with the impact of international trends brought changes to higher education institutions. It also led to new academic development activities. Thus, staff development in Thailand came into a new direction period.

Given these sorts of pressures, it is no wonder that there is an impetus for universities to support the idea of academic development. Since each university has a different set of priorities, it follows that the sorts of models for academic development may also differ.

Ramsden (2003) indicated that academic development is no longer the domain of centralised units with a specific mandate but should be the responsibility of every faculty, department and unit. In this sense, Ramden focused on the quality of organization leadership, organisational structures that develop quality, scholarship that includes the ideas of reflection, informed critique, evaluation and development. He described a cycle of reflection and action for change. To achieve change in the quality of teaching and learning, we ought rather to look carefully at the environment in which an instructor works and the system of ideas which that environment represents. This means an emphasis on teams, curricula, courses, and departments, as well as on individual academics.

2.7 Faculty Development Efforts

Seldin (1993) defines faculty development efforts as those containing an eight-fold opportunity for growth in the following areas:

1. Development of a wide variety of teaching skills.
2. Creation of links between the processes of teaching and learning.
3. Enhancement of interpersonal skills particularly as they are related to student / teacher rapport.
4. Improvement of communication skills specific to discipline and pedagogy.
5. Fostering greater intrinsic satisfaction in teaching.
6. Improvement in self-monitoring and self-adaptation skills.
7. Facilitation of a faculty educative dialogue to assert commonality of purpose.
8. Provision of sympathetic and knowledgeable feedback.

This notion of community and collaborative development is supported by Eble and McKeachie (1985). Their research indicates that a sense of faculty empowerment and ownership of the development initiatives that characterize successful professional growth programs. Consequently, programs based on autonomy, independence, and personal initiative may more likely create internal motivation for teaching excellence than external motivators based on power structure and reward systems. Because these external motivators are a frequent source of professional intercollegial envy, they are sometimes viewed as contributing to persistent isolationist and protectionist practices among faculty. Similarly, Edgert (1990) supports the creation of new dialogical infrastructures within the academy to nurture and reinforce professional discourse about teaching expertise and excellence. In addition, he suggests peer observation, videotaping, and portfolio development as strategies that may help develop Schon's (1983) ideal 'reflective practitioner'.

Saroyan (1996) also proposes a model of assessing teaching competency based on boosting pedagogical expertise, and experimenting with variations in teaching strategies through professional reflection. Several researchers support the individual rather than institutional seeking of feedback, and view professional reflection as essential this path of improvement (Menges, 1991). Reflective teaching supported by nonjudgmental collegial conversation is a process also investigated by Amundsen (1992, 1993). She incorporates collaborative faculty discussion through a process of practice-centred inquiry involving observation, realization, and questioning. Amundsen concludes that this process is more likely to facilitate sustained periods of reflection, which contribute to improvement in various aspects of teaching. Both Amundsen and Wilson (1990) conclude that a faculty discussion group which engages in educative dialogue is necessary in addressing reflection and experimentation, and that participation in such programs is more likely to foster a substantial and sustained change in perspective about faculty teaching practices.

Carol (1991) studied how faculty at a large, suburban New York State community college learn all those things (beyond their subject areas) which they need to succeed as faculty, and to learn the factors which facilitate or impede such learning. The expectation

was that this knowledge could lead to planned change. This research indicates that most on-the-job learning occurs informally; that is, it is experience-based, usually unstructured and limited chiefly by the task or situation which evokes it. Beyond brief orientations and the distribution of a handbook, little is done to help faculty at community colleges learn departmental and divisional operations, college policies and procedures and relationships with other faculty, staff and administration. The study also revealed that informal learning was the major mode of learning for faculty chiefly through supervisors (usually department chairpersons), peers, trial, error and observation. Some based learning on previous experience, others learned through committee and task force participation, networking and by turning to college documents. Very little learning resulted from the staff, coaching, mentoring or informal social or work groups. The study concludes with recommendations for planned change (essentially involving increased awareness of the process and increased opportunities for learning from supervisors, peers, etc.), recommendations to other researchers and a model for orienting new faculty.

In a consolidation of studies Menges (1991) and Seldin (1994) suggest that successful teaching improvement programs exemplify several common characteristics. More specifically, they advocate that initiatives be designed for long term impact, but have interjections of short term reinforcement. They need to be structured with flexible and open-ended approaches to meet individual schedules and learning styles. Administration can demonstrate publicly visible support for the program. Participants exercise significant autonomy in shaping their development plans, and frequently do so within the context of an advisory group. Substantial numbers of faculty are involved in the design of the program at its conception. Lastly, excellence in the increase of teaching effectiveness is recognized and rewarded.

Geis (1991) suggests several institutional structures must be present to encourage the success of faculty development programs, including :

(a) existence of a facilitative context;
(b) appropriate senders of feedback;

(c) positive perceived purpose and nature of the message;
(d) recipient readiness;
(e) patterns of consequences. More specifically, he advocates an institutional culture.

Several faculty development programs have been suggested that attempt to build a viable bridge between teaching and research. One process that has gained credibility in facilitating that link is the action research model. When conducted through stages of reflection, questioning, data gathering, and remediating, teaching can be increasingly viewed as a research and development portion of the professional activities of a professor rather than a distinct and unrelated responsibility. In a study at Massey University, Emerson (1996) concludes that "This action research… provided a structure which allows staff to evaluate their present practices in teaching to refine their strategies in light of their experiences, their context and current thinking in the field" (p.624). Similarly, Svinicki (1990) suggests a cyclical framework for improving faculty effectiveness that includes a process of reflection, abstraction of reality, experimentation of practice, and renewed reflection.

2.8 Debate on Professional Development

There are three key aspects that contribute to understanding the nature of academic staff development. These are the culture in which academics find themselves, the way they experience and understand their work and how they then work in their environment. Knight and Trowler (2000, p.71) suggest that there are five critical and negative elements that characterise higher education. They suggest that there has been a move towards 'intensification', resulting in longer hours, more managing, pressure to publish and ultimately 'work degradation'. They indicate that there is a notion of 'hard managerialism', where academics feel the need to account for activities, keep meticulous records and documentation. With this perception of the environment, academics focus on what the institution requires rather than the quality of student learning, resulting in a focus on 'delivering the curriculum'. A 'loss of collegiality' and 'greedy institutions' lead academics to alienation and stress. Finally, Knight and Trowler suggest that the academic community

is characterised by ‘aging, malaise and marginality’ (p.71). This very negative list fails to take into account flexible work patterns, emerging support for minority, marginalised or ‘new’ groups, and a current focus on quality.

In a study with perspective on roadblocks to faculty development efforts Seldin (1994) outlines three barriers to efforts to increase faculty effectiveness. He suggests that the overly generic nature of many teaching improvement programs often prevents them from catering to an individual teacher’s highly specific needs. Additionally, some teachers fail to recognize a need for improvement in their teaching, either out of unawareness of the profile of desirable teacher qualities or out of their subjective perception of themselves as already achieving or surpassing effectiveness. Lastly, Seldin states that a belief exists that general pedagogical foundations do not contribute to discipline-specific practices and, therefore, are difficult to relate and apply to any one particular course. Some attempts to develop teaching skills among faculty have been described as “the learning to see, leading the blind” (Emerson, 1996, p.631).

This negativity is also reported by Fletcher and Patrick (1998, p.39-46). They suggest that changing academic culture would involve a move away from these activities with academic development focused on:

- faculty developers as change agents (Ramsden, 1998; Biggs, 1999; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999).
- research on the impact of teaching strategies for student learning (Boyer, 1990).
- collaboration with other units (Boud, 1999; McAlpine & Harris, 1999).

However, this positive list implies action by someone. This action needs to be informed by an understanding of how academics experience their job-in particular, teaching and learning. Phenomenographic research studies (reported in Ramsden 1992, Prosser & Trigwell, 1999, for example) indicate that teaching and learning strategies are related to conceptions of teaching and learning. This has an impact on the nature of an academic developer’s work:

> *Recent studies into lecturers' conceptions of teaching have raised staff developers' awareness of the role conception of teaching plays in the quality of teaching and learning. More and more educationalists begin to advocate that staff development activities should embrace designs for bringing about conceptual change (Ho, 1998, p.25).*

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) suggest that there are relations between aspects of the teacher's situation which include the teacher's prior experience, the teacher's perceptions of the situation, the teacher's approaches to teaching and the teaching outcomes (p.21). They say:

> *The more complete conceptions of teaching are thought to be related to an awareness of more aspects of teaching, and teachers need to become aware of the way they conceive of learning and teaching within the subjects they are teaching. teachers need to examine carefully the context in which they are teaching and to become aware of how that context relates to or affects the way they teach. Teachers need to be aware of and seek to understand the way their students perceive the learning and teaching situation. Teachers need to be continually revising, adjusting and developing their teaching in the light of this developing awareness. (p.173)*

The experience of working within faculties with teams of academics has only recently been reported in the literature relating to academic development (Hick, 1999; Boud, 1999). Essentially, the focus is on:

- Individual teacher's conceptual change;
- Teaching teams to support departmental and learning change;

- Flexible learning (especially in the areas of leadership and management of learning, internationalisation, environmental sustainability, and e-learning environment);
- Formal learning units leading to academic credit;
- Reflective practice to support a schorlarly, research based approach to learning development;
- Linking assessment with learning;
- Academic evaluation for improvement linked with the university's strategic directions and the departments' interpretations of the plan.

The above discussion would suggest that there seem to be many different and effective approaches but that a focus on conceptual change related to teaching and learning within a specific discipline context, whatever the approach, is important.

Boud (1999) indicates that the most effective location for academic development is within the department:

> *Most academic development takes place in locations where academics spend most of their time; departments, professional settings and research sites. It takes the form of exchanges with colleagues, interacting with students, working on problems, writing and associated activities. It is informal and not normally viewed as development.*

This view focuses on the reciprocal nature of peer learning. Hicks (1999) provides four models for the 'delivery' of academic development. The 'central model' is 'traditional', strong and based around centralised activity with some local activity. The 'dispersed model' is a form of departmentally organised professional development (this is the model Boud is referring to). The 'mixed model' relies on central generic activities and discipline-specific activities, has the potential for duplication and suffers from lack of coordination. Finally the 'integrated model' suggests that developers' and academics' work is interrelated and fed into one another through a collaborative process. Hicks

suggests that these models have implications for access to programs or development activities, resourcing, ownership, impact and scholarship (p.48-49).

2.9 Features of a New Model of Professional Development

Changes in global trends are not the only reason that there have been reconceptualisations of professional development in the past. Theories about the way learning and change occur have influenced educational thinking at all levels. In particular, there include social constructivism and individualism**.**

The theory of constructivism rests on the notion that there is an innate human drive to make sense of the world. Instead of absorbing or passively receiving objective knowledge that is "out there", learners actively construct knowledge by integrating new information and experiences into what they have previously come to understand, revising and reinterpreting old knowledge in order to reconcile it with the new (Billett, 1996).

According to Richardson (1999) in broad terms "constructivism refers to the belief that human knowledge is constructed" (p.146) but the term 'constructivist' is used in many different ways. She argued that there are two major approaches to constructivism, the individual and the social, that are usually tied to the learning theories of Jean Piaget and Vygotsky respectively. Individual constructivism focuses on the individual learner while social constructivism focuses "on the environment in which learning is taking place (situated cognition) and on learning that requires social interaction (Vygotskian sociocultural approach)" (Richardson, 1999, p.147).

Social and individual constructivism have changed the thinking about what constitutes effective professional development to bring about educational improvement.

2.9.1 The influence of social constructivism on conceptualisations of professional development.

Those who advocate a social constructivist view of learning, are critical of individual or personal constructivism because of its lack of acknowledgement of sociocultural perspectives (Bell & Gilbert, 1996; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). They advocate a view of learning which acknowledges the important role played by social interaction in the construction of knowledge.

> *Thus a social constructionist view of human development asserts that knowledge production is a social process, one aimed at constructing acceptable truth, and seen as involving plays of power within a society. It is not seen as something abstract, corresponding to a reality which everyone agrees on, regardless of their particular culture or outlook. Social processes and practices, such as communication, negotiation, conflict and rhetoric, create particular views of reality and knowledge (Gergen, 1985, cited in Bell and Gilbert, 1996, p.40).*

The addition of a socio-cultural perspective to constructivism has directed the attention of educators at all levels beyond the personal attributes of learners to the attributes of the environment in which the learning occurs. In the literature about professional development of educators two main themes can be identified that are related to the learning environment: professional development that is collaborative and the importance of the socio-cultural conditions that support collaborative learning.

It can be seen that those who argue for professional development that is informed by social constructivist theory have broadened the conceptualisation even further, by adding the dimensions of collaborative learning and development of the culture of workplaces as essential components.

The influence of individual constructivism on concepts of professional development

Fung (2000) summarised some of the other attributes of individual constructivism highlighted in the literature:

> *The building of new knowledge or mental constructs, therefore, is dependent upon the preconceptions that a learner brings to the educational experience (Anderson, 1992) and the context in which it occurs (Carr et al., 1994). It will require previously existing knowledge to interact with new experiences (Osborne & Freyberg, 1985; Driver, 1988; Carr et al., 1994). Since learners have different experiences and prior knowledge, they may construct different meanings in the same learning context (Pope & Gilbert, 1983; Osborne & Freyberg, 1985; Fensham et al., 1994) (p.155).*

The influence of constuctivist views can be seen in the first three principles of the following summary statement of learning principles by the American Psychological Association (1993, cited in Lawson, Hattam, McInerney & Smyth, 1997, p.11). They asserted that learning is:

- active and constructive;
- goal seeking and meaning-generated;
- directed by learners according to their beliefs, affective states and motivations;
- facilitated by collaboration; and
- influenced by context.

The influence of individual constructivism in changing conceptualisations of professional development can be seen in the view of 'professional development as self development' (Hargreaves, 1992a) or 'personal development' (Goodsen, 1992). Proponents of this view of professional development argue that educators are the product of their past experiences, and the values, beliefs, attitude, knowledge and skills that have evolved from these, so that changing their practices involves changing them as people.

The emphasis on the personal development aspect of professional development can be seen in three related themes in the literature about the professional development of educators: reflective practice; practitioner research; and the personal conditions that support learning.

- Reflective practice

Dewey's ideas have been developed by many theorists over the years and reflection is seen as an important process for educators because it involves identifying reasons for actions and considering how decisions are informed by the individual educator's past experience, beliefs and values. It has been suggested that educators at all levels should deliberately structure 'reflective space' in their professional lives (Smyth, Hattam, McInerney & Lawson, 1997; Dobbins, 1994).

Advocates of critically reflective practice view it as a powerful form of personal professional development for practitioners because it asks them to reflect on their practice in terms of their reasons for making particular choices, how these are informed by their personal experiences, beliefs and values, and the extent to which these support or impede teaching and learning for students from a diverse range of backgrounds. They believe that this process of confronting personal experience and philosophy can lead to changes in beliefs and understandings that lead to improved practice (Smyth et al., 1999b).

- Practitioner research

Action research, in particular, is depicted as a means of engaging practitioners in rigorous cycles of planning, observation, action and reflection, which can lead to change in understandings and practice. The idea of action research originated with Kurt Lewin (cited in Kemmis & McTaggert, 1982) but has achieved particular prominence in educational fields in Australia through the work of Kemmis and McTaggert (1982).

- Implications for reflective practice and practitioner research

> *Action Learning builds communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where communities can promote learning by shared practice and commitment to enlightening themselves about the relationship between their own circumstance, action and consequence in their own situation. It empowers them to establish their own educational value (Wadsworth, 1997).*

The terms 'action learning' and 'action research' are frequently used interchangeably. Both approaches have been widely adopted and documented in various sectors such as in education field (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The role which action learning and action research can play in both professional development and organisational change has been well documented in literature (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996; Limerick, Passfield & Cunnington, 1994).

Action learning can be described in a number of ways, but generally it is a type of learning-through-doing that involves participants in reflecting on their experience. Action learning has its roots in theory from a variety of fields, including :

- Lewin (1951) in action research.
- The work of Knowles (1985) and Kolb (1984) in adult learning.
- Argyris (1985) and Schon's (1983) work in critical reflection.

The iterative processes of planning, action, observing and reflecting in the context of the workplace allow the educational practitioner to combine theory and research with their practice. Action learning reduces the disparity between espoused theory and theory in use (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

Action learning (Revans, 1991) is a team-based, workplace activity that brings together people with a common problem or project to work out solutions or achieve project outcomes. The process of action learning helps participants learn how to learn by

dealing with real problems in the workplace. The action learning model provides a 'real time', learning partnership. The action learning model as defined by Revans is,

> *a means of development, intellectual, emotional or physical, that requires its subject, through responsible involvement in some real, complex and stressful problems, to achieve intended change sufficient to improve his or her observable behaviour. (Revans in Mumford 1997, p.4)*

Action learning and action research share characteristics in common:

- The project examines a real problem in real time that will not lead to one "right" answer (Smith & O'Neil 2003, p.64).

- The project focuses on a problem that is directly related to the reality of the participants' workplace (Smith & O'Neil 2003, p.64).

- The project moves through a "spiral of cycles" with stages such as *plan, act, observe* and *reflect* leading to on-going cycles of learning and action (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p.66).

- The project is participative (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000, p.203).

- The project invites participants to engage in self-examination as part of their learning (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000, p.203).

- The project is usually conducted by a team, sometimes referred to as a 'set' (McGill & Beaty, 2001). Zuber-Skerritt (2003) argues that action research has grown out of the social sciences and is located in a paradigm that is phenomenological, interpretive and often draws on qualitative data, and contrasts this with the natural science model, which tends to be positivist, normative and is more likely to use quantitative data. In essence, action learning and action research seek to develop a

specific solution to a complex, real-life situation, while research in the positivist framework aims to develop generalisable solutions. Each is useful in different contexts.

2.9.2 Personal conditions that support learning

From across a range of studies, a comprehensive list of personal conditions can be identified. Fung (2000), from her work using a constructivist approach to professional development with teachers in Hong Kong, reported that participants required conditions of personal support, autonomy, reflection, respect for their capacities and acknowledgment of their prior views and knowledge.

A recent Australian study of teacher workplace learning in schools in New South Wales by Retallick and Clancy (1998) highlighted other personal conditions that impact on participants' learning. These were:

- understanding and valuing of workplace learning;
- needs and priorities;
- responses to change; and
- emotional responses.

In summary, individual constructivist learning theory has contributed to changing views about what constitutes effective professional development for educators. In particular it has focused attention on the need for professional development which develops participants' reflective processes, especially the ability to be critically reflective. It has highlighted the importance of practitioners constructing professional knowledge through researching their own practice. Finally, it has called attention to a range of personal conditions that need to be considered for professional development to be successful. These include participants' needs, priorities, capacities, emotional responses, beliefs and values, and attributes such as a positive attitude to learning and other learners and commitment to a personal vision.

This section has examined the impact of individual and social constructivist learning theory on the reconceptualisation of professional development for educators. It has demonstrated that these theories have been influential in changing understanding about the features of successful professional development. In particular these theories have draw attention to the importance of reflection, practitioner research, collaboration and the creation of learning communities through the reciprocal development of individuals and the personal, structural and cultural conditions that shape their professional lives.

Paitoon (2000) also highlights the importance of a new direction for faculty development in Thailand. He proposed that even though faculty development faced some problems which caused both successes and failures, faculty development could be regarded as a principal innovation of Thai higher education. It is a device and technique which will lead to the efficient development of Thai higher education. The activities and implementations must be adjusted according to such circumstances as:

1. Faculty development in the future should be based on intellect or philosophy which are the criteria or topics for arguments among faculty members.

2. Concepts and contents of teaching to be used and activities and seminars of faculty development should be based on the firm knowledge of the courses but at the same time should have as many practical techniques as possible.

3. Presentation of teaching should be performed and discussed in the context of: teaching and research; teaching and community service; and teaching and society.

4. Techniques and activities in faculty development should not only teach how to think and how to practice but also should add some new values to Thai society.

5. Activities of faculty development should be varied to serve various aptitudes and interests of instructors at the same time, especially activities which enable the instructors to study, learn and understand by themselves in a span of time.

6. Specific units such as faculty development units and teaching improvement units, and support such as teaching media service, textbook service and testing research service should be permanently established with regular staff and adequate funds in order to maintain continuity and relations and to be the centres.

7. Administrators of universities or higher education institutions must change their orientation to be academic administrators rather than political administrators by thinking about teaching and the development of the majority of faculty members rather than chiefly concentrate on developing themselves and their own group.

8. The implementation of faculty development must initially stress points and principal goals in the main and the compulsory spots in order to achieve immediate effects in a wide circle.

9. Finally, is the system of promotion a complete cycle which stimulates the instructors to see the importance of development and promotes and arranges activities for interested instructors, gives spiritual support and finally gives reward.

The new direction for faculty development is in fact the direction for higher education in general. The direction for Thai higher education is under revision to set new appropriate alternatives, so the direction for faculty development must also be inevitably revised. But the revision of the direction for faculty development not only has valuable effects on teaching but also means the lead to the appropriate direction for Thailand is the role which greatly challenges the people concerned in faculty development and at the same time also greatly challenges people concerned in international faculty development.

2.10 The Constructive Nature of Workplace Learning

Research on how people learn in the workplace demonstrates that what is taking place is constructivist, situated learning.

From this direction, faculty staff are becoming learners and helping to build a new way for faculty development. Mulford and Silins (2001) identified three major elements in achieving successful school reform and improving student learning. These are developing supportive decision-making structures and a professional community involving shared norms focused on continuous enhancement of learning for all students, in addition to critical reflective dialogue based on performance data and a capacity for learning. The third element identified was a nurturing professional development program (Mulford & Silins, 2001).

A more focused approach to this issue is to be found in the emerging discussion on 'teachers as learners'. This emphasizes the need for teachers as well as students to be learners in school - indeed, Barth (1990) has argued that there is an important sense in which teachers can be regarded as the most important learners in schools. With teachers as the principal learners in the school, the success of school restructuring is single dependent on the attention given to teacher development activities which empower teachers to realize their potential. The principles of adult learning are important in this perspective. For instance, the andragogical model of Knowles (1984) suggests that a number of assumptions should be considered in relation to adult learners.

A relational framework is adopted by Seddon (1991) to highlight three broad aspects of teachers' work: teachers as workers, the labour process of teaching, and the industrial dynamic of schools. The significance of the notion of workplace learning for teachers' work is profound. The idea of the school as an 'educative workplace' for teachers (as well as students) represents a considerable advance on thinking about teachers' work. Therefore, faculty professionals are also adult learners and workplace learners. They go about learning what they have to learn through different processes, both formal and

informal learning.

The development of research on teacher education, particularly emerging conceptions of teachers' knowledge and how people learn to teach, could provide useful insights into improving the quality of teaching. Carter (1992) summarizes some of the major findings in this area:

Teachers' knowledge is personal, in the sense that teachers formulate and draw upon their personal understandings of the practical circumstances in which they work – personal biographies and individual orientations of teachers are played out in their understandings of their work and their action in classrooms. Teachers' knowledge is constructed and invented from repeated experience in accomplishing tasks or close approximation of tasks in a domain. Teachers have stored knowledge which is constructed and invented from repeated experience in accomplishing tasks or close approximation of tasks in a domain. Teachers have stored knowledge of events in classrooms and they also formulate fresh interpretations of students' actions and reactions when earlier events no longer seem sensible.

The conditions of workplace learning comprise the environments, circumstances, situations, and states of being that affect, support, promote, engage or facilitate the learning of workers or employees. Holliday (1994) attempted to identify conditions of teacher learning by reviewing a wide range of literature from adult learning, teachers' work, the teaching workplace and other related literature. He presented five conditions of workplace learning, and how these conditions promote the workplace learning of teachers. These five conditions are: Self, Personal Meaning, Action, Collegiality, and Empowerment. Holliday (1998 Module 2) explained further that these five conditions of teacher learning promote the learning process. These conditions are interrelated synergically, in that they each enhance the ability of the others to promote the learning process. They are also symbiotically related, in that they are naturally interdependent, so that any one condition would be debilitated if separated from the others.

The notion of 'conditions of teacher learning' was informed by research and literature on teacher development. For instance, Retallick (1994) identified seven factors which account for teachers' willingness and ability to engage in significant workplace learning: the context, the teacher as person and learner, the situations of teaching, learning resources and support, system recognition and reward, the culture of the school, and the nature of the innovation/change. The study also presented a list of facilitating and inhibiting conditions of teacher workplace learning, largely drawn from the literature of the late 1980s and early 1990s. He also investigates these issues in the late 1990s and within a specific context of policy and practice, i.e. teaching in the NSW Department of Education and Training.

2.11 The Impact of the Literature Review on My Project

Accordingly, Beckett and Hager (2002) suggested that action-focused theory is the new emerging paradigm of learning that links the role of action in learning. Jarvis (1992) referred to in Beckett and Hager (2002) views learning as a "process of thinking and acting and drawing conclusion". Thus, for Jarvis as for the emerging paradigm of learning, the norm is for learning to involve an action component. Therefore this project was planned with an action component. When learning is closely linked with action, processes and product of learning are not separate. The process of learning facilitates the product of learning which at the same time enhances further process and so on.

Action learning can be described in a number of ways, but generally it is a type of learning-through-doing that involves participants in reflecting on their experience.

With action learning, teams get together to solve workplace issues. Learning itself is the aim of action learning, not just problem solving. The learning is based on action, reflection and analysis is it helps individuals respond more effectively to change. Through the team lecturers approach a teaching and learning issue through understanding, action and reflection. The emphasis on the personal development aspect

of professional development can be seen in related themes in the literature about the professional development of educators: reflective practice; practitioner research.

Mezirow, in the early 1980s - and others - have stressed that the heart of all learning lies in the way we process experience, in particular our critical reflection of experience. They spoke of learning as cycle that begins with experience, continues with reflection and later leads to action, which itself becomes a concrete experience for reflection.

It is also an effective way to bring about organisational learning. Lecturers are given the opportunity to think about their learning, communities of practice are established. In the literature about pprofessional development of educators, the main themes can be identified that are related to the learning environment: professional development that is collaborative learning. It can be seen that professional development that is informed by social constructivist theory has broadened the conceptualisation by adding the dimensions of collaborative learning as essential components.

The conceptualisation of professional development as development of a learning community brings together the ideas about professional development as personal and social change, explored earlier, then the idea of professional development as structural change within a workplace to which structural features of workplaces are inextricably linked.

So the literature indicates there is a need for a paradigm shift in faculty learning and to establish a workplace-based action learning process of collaborative staff development. This was built in to the project at Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The design of the research is based on the concept that faculty's workplace learning is shaped by both individual and contextual factors. The study used action research to investigate how workplace learning can improve teaching using an action learning set. It sought to gather information on both the contextual and personal dimensions of faculty learning using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

Using an action research approach I set out to:

- To analyze how faculty learn whilst working.
- To investigate the nature of faculty workplace learning and the factors that facilitate or impede it.
- To understand how faculty workplace learning can contribute to improving the quality of teaching.
- To trial a model of faculty workplace learning which takes account of both individual and contextual factors in a faculty's professional development.

The study was conducted in two phases, the first of which provided information on current workplace learning and the second of which consisted of three action cycles to investigate how workplace learning can contribute to the improvement of teaching at Sripatum University.

3.2 Phase 1: Quantitative Phase

Phase 1 (quantitative) is a survey of all full-time faculty staff at Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus. The questionnaire sought to elicit information on the aspect of their teaching which they felt had definitely improved over the last few years and the possible sources of help in bringing about that improvement. It also asked faculty staff to identify aspects of their teaching which they would like to improve significantly in the next few years (Appendix A).

The questions were developed from Retallick (1993) who reported on workplace learning in the professional development of teachers that the school is a site for teachers' continuing professional development.

The survey was distributed to all lecturers of Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus and 42 useable surveys were returned out of 50 lecturers. There were more female than male: 26 respondents were female and 16 respondents were male. The 42 respondents on campus worked in 6 different faculties, with 11 respondents from Faculty of Business Administration, 4 respondents from Faculty of Accounting, 5 respondents from Faculty of Law, 6 respondents from Faculty of Informatics, 9 respondents from Faculty of Liberal Arts and 7 respondents from Faculty of Communication Arts.

3.3 Phase 2 : Qualitative Phase

Phase 2 (qualitative) was conducted by selecting from the survey faculty staff who wanted to improve their work with a focus on working closely with colleagues. Qualitative research methods are well suited to this type of analysis because, in a qualitative study Maxwell, 1996 indicated that (one is) interested not only in the physical events and behaviour that is taking place, but also in how the participants make sense of this and how their understanding influences their behaviour.

Anderson (1998) agreed that studying and interpreting human experiences in authentic settings cannot be best represented quantitatively and stated, "Qualitative research is a

form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them" (p.119).

The faculty staff were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

(1) A range of teaching experience;
(2) Faculty who have undergone significant workplace learning in recent years;
(3) Representation from all professional fields on campus; and
(4) Willingness to be involved in an action learning project and follow-up interviews.

The purpose of this phase was to establish a group for the greater involvement of faculty workplace learning that could contribute to improving their teaching. Participants selected an area of appropriate improvement, what they were going to improve and how they were to go about it. The study suggested an approach to workplace learning that integrated work and learning, by using action research to generate experiential and collaborative learning. By applying the concept of action learning and action research as a model of understanding workplace learning, we provided a vehicle that contributed to improving the quality of teaching in our workplace. Action research and action learning in adult education provide a theoretical methodological framework for the practice of learning, teaching and professional development (Kelly, 1997).

The concept of 'learning by doing' in which learning is perceived as experiential and reflective, is fundamental to this approach. It recognizes that faculty learn through the active adaptation of their experiences with other people and their environment. Moreover, the process of building on experience is a natural one for most people and action research provides a framework for formalizing and making this process more effective.

In this study, faculty became participatory action researchers, seeking to help improve their work. The action research process helped faculty to change themselves, so that their interactions created the necessary conditions for inquiry and learning. Faculty were

engaged in participative, problem solving where those doing the research and those doing the learning are one and the same.

The purpose of this is to provide an operational strategy for ongoing workplace learning to improve the quality of teaching and the greater involvement of faculty in the development of an education and learning strategy in the workplace. It provided a better understanding of learning through workplace learning activities and carried substantial evidence of the kinds of workplace learning emerging from faculty's teamwork.

3.4 Action Learning and Action Research

Action learning (Revans, 1991) is a team-based, workplace activity that brings together people with a common problem or project to work out solutions or achieve project outcomes. The action learning group or set provides support and encouragement to try out new ways of doing thing and new ways of thinking about things. The process of action learning helps participants learn how to learn by dealing with real problems in the workplace. In other words, action learning involves: learning from experience, sharing an experience with others, critical valuation of that experience, and then implementation and review of the experience (Mailick et al., 1998, p.52)

The case for action learning is strong for staff development in the tertiary education sector (Kember, 2000; Tjabane, 2003; Zuber-Skerritt, 2003).

Action learning can be described in a number of ways, but generally it is a type of learning-through-doing that involves participants in reflecting on their experience. The terms 'action learning' and 'action research' are frequently used interchangeably.

Action learning and action research share characteristics in common:

- The project examines a real problem in real time that will not lead to one 'right'

answer (Smith & O'Neil, 2003).

- The project focuses on a problem that is directly related to the reality of the participants' workplace (Smith & O'Neil, 2003).

- The project moves through a 'spiral of cycles' with stages such as *plan, act, observe* and *reflect* leading to on-going cycles of learning and action (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

- The project is participative (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000).

- The project invites participants to engage in self-examination as part of their learning (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000).

- The project is usually conducted by a team, sometimes referred to as a 'set' (McGill Beaty, 2001). Zuber-Skerritt (2003) argues that action research has grown out of the social sciences and is located in a paradigm that is phenomenological, interpretive and often draws on qualitative data, and contrasts this with the natural science model, which tends to be positivist, normative and is more likely to use quantitative data. In essence, action learning and action research seek to develop a specific solution to a complex, real-life situation, while research in the positivist framework aims to develop generalisable solutions. Each is useful in different contexts.

Action Learning has its roots in theory from a variety of fields, including:

- Lewin (1951) in action research.
- The work of Knowles (1985) and Kolb (1984) in adult learning.
- Argyris (1985) and Schon's (1983) work in critical reflection.

Action research was selected as the appropriate method for this project because Sripatum University had a strong need to promote staff development and improved

practice as much as to understand factors which enhanced it. There was a need to seek to develop a specific solution to a complex, real-life situation. Thus the action element of trialing an approach was a significant factor in this decision. Faculty staff are themselves researchers so it was important that the appraoch be collaborative.

3.4.1 What are key steps in the action learning model ?

Many models of Action Learning have been suggested over the years. However, they share several common characteristics. One model depicting key steps in Action Learning is shown in Rothwell (1999) and is described in this section.

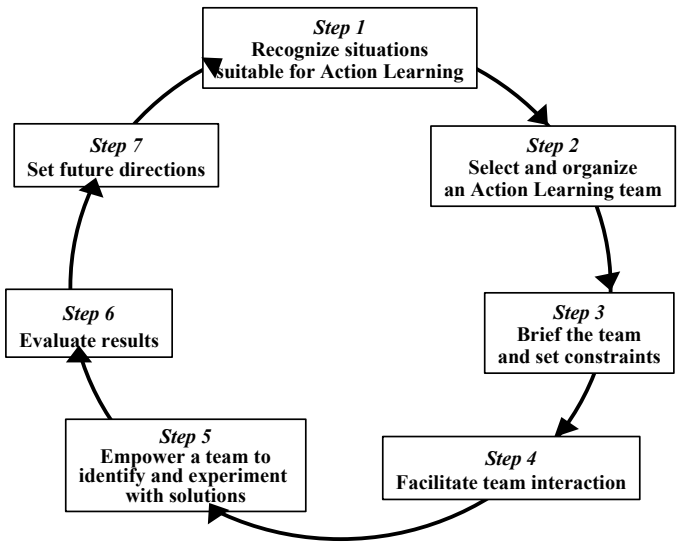


Figure 1 : Key Steps in the action learning model (Rothwell, 1999)

Action learning has been adopted in the workplace as a viable approach to experiential management education and development and an important element of a training and development strategy (Vince & Martin, 1993). It involves the members of an organization in group situations with the goal of helping each group member learn through the process of finding solution to their own problems. Through this process, learners increase their

self-awareness and develop new knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills for making changes and redefining their roles within new contexts (Williams, 1992).

3.4.2 Implementation of action learning in this study

The action learning team comprised one representative from each faculty. Members of the team had direct responsibility to act on issues addressed in the group. The team expected to produce the best results by meeting once or twice per month.

The action learning process uses a learning cycle with a planning stage, action stage, describing or reporting stage and reflection stage. To obtain data about what the action learning team members learned from the project and what the group contributed to individual team members, I asked each member to express individually their perceptions during each cycle in a journal and further data was obtained through interview. Evaluation of action learning outcomes was also incorporated at the end of the project. This was conducted to evaluate the results upon completion of the action learning process and was intended to determine in the final analysis how much was gained from the action learning team effort. Data was collected by interview at this stage. The evaluation was adapted from Kirkpatrick (1994) cited in Rothwell (1999) and focused on four key issues: evaluating reaction, evaluating learning, evaluating on-the-job behaviour change, and evaluating organizational results**.**

The research team also included a facilitator (myself) a faculty developer, and a project consultant who acted as a critique group to provide input to the action learning team and to critique the way the team worked. Their responsibilities covered faculty development and academic affairs including teaching improvement. In accordance with commitments made through the ethics approval process, the critique team agreed that data was to be kept confidential and not used in any way for staff appraisal.

The critique group roles were:

- Facilitating project implementation;
- Helping the action learning team to identify their teaching strengths and areas of development ; and
- Suggesting useful ideas for effective teaching.

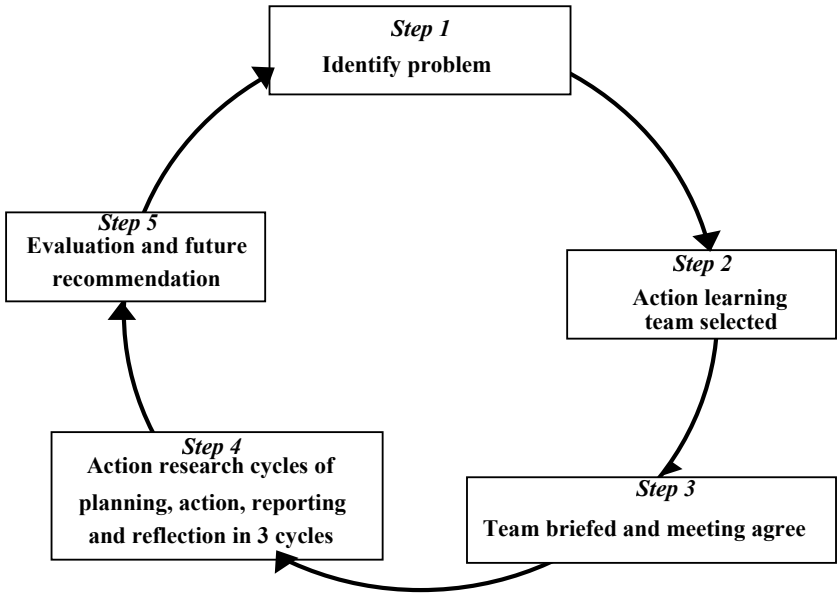


Figure 2 : Steps of the of action learning project

The actual stages of the project-based of action learning process in my study consisted of:

1. The researcher and management identify the problem; the survey was conducted to provide information about current workplace learning;

2. The action learning team was selected;
3. The team was briefed and meeting times agreed;
4. Action learning cycles of planning, action, reporting and reflection were carried out in 3 cycles; and
5. Evaluation and future recommendation

Each action learning cycle in had roots in the theory of: planning, action, reporting, and reflection. Each stage formed an action research cycle that set out to investigate how faculty had used workplace learning previously and the value of an action learning set in developing professional practice. At the end of each cycle, the team reflected on the outcomes of changes that they had introduced into their teaching and agreed on the modification or continuation of those changes.

3.5 Implementation of Action Learning – Cycle 1

- *The planning stage*

The team consisted of six lecturers and the critique group consisting of the researcher as facilitator, a project consultant, a faculty developer. The six lecturers consisted of:

- L1 was the representative from The Faculty of Accounting;
- L2 was representative from The Faculty of Business Administration;
- L3 was representative from The Faculty of Communication Arts;
- L4 was representative from The Faculty of Informatics;
- L5 was representative from The Faculty of Law;
- L6 was representative from The Faculty of Liberal Arts;

The critique group became involved through their responsibilities as faculty developers and for facilitating project implementation, by helping the action learning team and suggesting useful ideas.

The first meeting in May 2003 was to identify a problem area (an issue, challenge, or initiative) to be addressed through an action learning project. The team decided about thematic concerns to be addressed. It was realised that an action plan should be produced to face the situation. The main perspective in building the action plan was that the team could understand the situation and learn from their experience, and make their experience accessible to others.

The facilitator and consultant suggested to the team that they needed to work together in sustaining four fundamental aspects of the action research involved in this process, as mentioned by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988). They were:

- To develop a plan of critically informed action to improve what is already happening;
- To act to implement the plan;
- To observe the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it occurs; and
- To reflect upon these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of cycles.

I recommended that they undertake the above four aspects collaboratively. This is an important point for the team because the approach underpinning the study was not individualistic. An individualistic approach was likely to prevent the critical dynamic of the group.

- *The action stage*

Each lecturer proposed that the activities and teaching strategies vary according to the needs and characteristics of their teaching discipline. Lecturers began the process by determining what knowledge within the discipline is worth knowing and therefore worth the students' effort. Once the action learning team members had determined what he or

she expected the student to accomplish, appropriate learning objectives should be formulated.

- *The reporting stage*

Attending this meeting were the research team and critique group (facilitator, consultant, and faculty developer). At first, I began the meeting by reviewing the previous meeting and the recent actions. The action learning spiral was used as a tool to evaluate our actions, to reflect upon our learning experience and to revise a plan for the next action. We reviewed the actions and progress of change. Some obstacles impacted negatively on the attainment of project goals. The members also presented meaningful results from their classroom to the action learning meeting. Some members of the research team brought forth the issue of evaluating our practices. We shared our experience in an open air situation.

- *The reflection stage*

Attendants at the meeting were the research team, facilitator, consultant and faculty developer. At first, I began the meeting by simply reviewing the previous meeting. The action learning spiral was used as a tool to evaluate our actions, to reflect upon our learning experience, and to revise a plan for the next action.

Even though the project showed progression indicated by lecturers and from students' responses, the action learning team pointed out the main issues in the implementation of the project. The group had mutually decided that they would reorganise the way they taught and move towards a student centred model.

3.6 Implementation of Action Learning – Cycle 2

- *The planning stage*

Cycle 2 commenced with meeting No. 4 August, 2003 and continued to resolve the issues that had arisen in cycle 1. The meeting discussed teaching improvement approaches that would be appropriate, further action, and the action plan for the rest of the project**.**

Faculty factors which must be reconsidered included**:**

1) learning objectives;
2) size of the class;
3) current ability of students to function autonomously; and
4) current ability of the instructor to utilize these educational strategies.

- *The action stage*

A few visits were made by lecturers to observe others' classroom practice and formal reports were made to the action learning team. Literature and informal staff room discussion provided advocacy and collaboration for classroom change.

The action stage involved:

a) Development of the traditional style of teaching in order to move towards a student-centred approach.
b) Promotion of the student-centred environment.

This teaching mainly emphasizes the learners and the learning process. The learners are the persons who specify what they want to study, how to study and for what purpose. The lecturers give advice and consultation and evaluated them. This style includes self-study-based, inquiry-based, problem-solving based and research-based teaching.

c) Establishing a Conducive Environment

Motivational aspects of student learning can be addressed by establishing a positive emotional climate in the learning situation.

- *The reporting stage*

During the meeting lecturers continued the discussion of issues arising from the action plan and the action learning team described the changes they had brought into their practice together with difficulties they found. Although, some obstacles impacted negatively on the attainment of project goals, members also reported meaningful results from their classroom.

During this period, communication about the project's progress continued within the team. I began meeting No.5 on September, 2003 by expressing my gratitude to my colleagues for their consistent commitment to the work through the project. The members of the research team presented their report relating to the students' response to the new learning process.

- *The reflection stage*

I asked each member to express individually their reflections concerning the projects' achievement and barriers encountered. I also asked them to identify sources of learning. This continued with the critique group's feedback on the progress of project.

Following meeting No.5 which ended with the personal reflection of each team member, the next cycle continued to resolve the issues that arose from the reflections.

3.7 Implementation of Action Learning – Cycle 3

- *The planning stage*

Meeting No.6 at the end of September, 2003 continued to resolve the issues that arose from the group reflection. The meeting discussed teaching improvement approaches that would be appropriate, such as variation of the objectives of each class, minimizing risk, and balancing lecturers' and students' activities.

- *The action stage*

Following meeting No.5 which ended with the personal reflection of each team member, the next cycle continued to resolve the issues that arose from the reflections.The team pointed out the that main issues in the implementation of the project were:

- To modify their practice by stressing the need to cover the subject content source.
- To cover the content, students need to take responsibility for learning.
- To operate student-centred approaches to activities according to each objective and choose short well structured activities for content to be covered in each period of study**.**
- To monitor the changes occurring within the projects. The changes were recorded for further discussion in the next meeting. The reflection of each member was also requested to ensure the learning outcomes.

- *The reporting stage*

Meeting No.7 in October, 2003 continued to discuss the way the team carried out action and the issues that arose on reflection.

The work overload limited the time to meet together. The members of research team had many other tasks besides their involvement in this project. Reports confirmed benefits from the student-centred strategies and positive responses from students.

At the end of semester, feedback from students reported that they were quite positive about the introduction of learning strategies into the course. They were asked to indicate the important things they had learned in the course.

- *The reflection stage*

At the last meeting, in October 2003, all action learning team members and facilitators and critique group members were involved. We limited the discussion to the following agenda:

- Educational implications of the outcomes of the project.
- Personal and professional development.
- Perception of action learning project.

3.8 Evaluation of Action Learning Outcomes

After the last meeting of the action learning project, I had the opportunity to undertake an evaluation of learning outcomes. This study was conducted to evaluate the results upon completion of the action learning process and it was intended to determine in the final analysis how much was gained from the action learning team effort. The evaluation was adapted from Kirkpatrick (1994) cited in Rothwell (1999) and focused on four key issues : evaluating reaction, evaluating learning, evaluating on-the-job behaviour change, and evaluating organizational results (Appendix B).

The purpose of this evaluation is to report the analysis and interpretations of the data collected to provide a description of how the process of action learning informs faculty workplace learning and teaching practices. Each interview was summarized soon after the session and participants were asked to confirm or amend the summary.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The project data was collected in various ways through questionnaire, observation, interview, written statements by the subjects, documents and group meetings. The data was gathered on the research sites as observational field notes, interview notes, tape recording, and written journals.

At the start of the study data were collected by questionnaire to all full-time faculty staff at Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus. The questionnaire sought to elicit information on the aspect of their teaching which they felt had definitely improved over the last few years and the possible sources of help in bringing about that improvement. It also asked faculty staff to identify aspects of their teaching which they would like to improve significantly in the next few years (Appendix A).

Thereafter I spent time as facilitator in the action learning team. Observation field notes and a written journal were written at the end of each meeting describing in detail of teaching improvement occurred and lecturer workplace learning.

Moreover semi-structured interviews were held with the action learning team members. The purpose of this interview was to report the analysis and interpretations of the data collected to provide a description of how the process of action learning informs faculty workplace learning and teaching practices. Each interview was summarized soon after the session and participants were asked to confirm or amend the summary.

Each lecturer recorded their experiences and feeling about the project in their journal on an every meeting basis and indicated where they had made progress and where they needed to improve, and any problems they had concerning the project.

I was actively involved in the professional lives of the individuals being researched. In conducting qualitative research. Merriam (1991) stated, “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (p.52). However, it is possible that because I

played a dual role as an participant and researcher, the findings may have been influenced. On that account, I paid close attention to the biases that my expertise and beliefs presented. I sought consultation about evidence of bias with expert members and other colleagues on my campus. In addition, I sought the expertise of a committee member and a colleague to verify coding of the data for identification of themes.

3.10 The Techniques Carried Out to Access Qualitative Primary Data in My Project were:

- Recording

Audio taping was operated during the action learning meetings. Before the project commenced. I informed participants that meetings would be recorded and they gave consent. The research team agreed that this activity would benefit the team for evaluation at every stage of the research. However, due to personal concerns, on some occasions the discussion was off the record. Basically, recording was an essential tool for me to provide accurate data for further analysis.

- Interviews

Conducting individual and group interviews were methods that I used to gain an understanding of the participants' perceptions of changes in their teaching, workplace learning and reflective practices. Seidman (1998) states,

> *If a researcher's goal . . . is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry* (p.4).

The researcher's goal was to understand the meaning of teachers' experiences with instruction, as related to action research.

Questions for conducting the semi-structured interviews are presented in Appendix B. The interview questions corresponded with the research questions and were aligned with the action learning process. The interview prompts were open-ended. Follow-up questions were used when needed for clarification or to invoke further response to the question. The questions were adapted from Kirkpatrick (1994) cited in Rothwell (1999) who focuses on four key issues: evaluating reaction, evaluating learning, evaluating on-the-job behavior change, and evaluating organizational results.

The open-ended questions used to frame the interview conversations focused upon identifying attempts to modify teaching practices based on workplace learning involvement, examining incentives to seek professional growth in teaching activities, and drawing conclusions about the value of that workplace learning experience.

Additionally, the open ended nature of questioning was intended to allow opportunities for respondents to voice opinions about events, and to propose insights into certain occurrences as a tool for guiding further inquiry (Yin, 1984).

The interviews were recorded by me and each interview spent time about 20 minutes for individual interview and one hour for group interview. Each interview was transcribed and following the transcription of each interview, each participant was asked to review the transcription of his or her interview. This member check helped to ensure the accuracy of the data. The interviews provided me with a context and therefore a better understanding of the behaviour being discussed.

- Written Journals

Written journals were used to record the progress of the situation as it improved. The research team kept the journals as a tool to analyse our learning processes. According to Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988), the journal requires a structured and supportive environment. This type of journal was useful in gathering information and in sharing the experience of issues arising during the research and in evaluating the action taken.

The action learning team including myself regularly discussed the format of the journal, in order to build a picture of the situation. Participants had the following content in his / her journal following the action learning activities: plan, act, observe, reflect, and revise the plan.

The main elements of the journal were:

1. Information from participants in the team about their opinion of the situation, and about their expected learning situations, and personal views on the implementation of this study.
2. The outcomes of each meeting during the research. The issues that arose during the research were documented in journals, and discussed together within the research team. The discussion was audio recorded and I got a copy of the written journal from the action learning team.
3. Evaluation of the project and my reflection from the research.

- Observations

Observations were conducted to gather supporting evidence. The researcher kept a record of observation in meetings and occasional visits to class. The researcher used these observations as evidence to support the three areas on which this study focused:

(a) the overall teacher role;
(b) teaching practices; and
(c) workplace learning.

I recorded my observation data in observation field notes. My observation field notes included both formal observation in the action learning meeting and classroom and informal observation outside action learning meeting time.

- Field Notes

Field notes were taken during and after each action learning meeting in order to observe a variety of activities and responses throughout the time in meetings and to be daily sensitive to demands and routines. Discussion took place with participants most often informally and occasionally by appointment. These notes included description of people, events, activities, and conversation. In addition, as part of the field notes, I recorded ideas, questions and reflections, as well as noting any patterns that began to emerge.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

The approach to analysis combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. The questionnaire responses were converted into a form which can be computer analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS).

Data gathered in the qualitative phase was transcribed and coded. The resulting categories were used to interpret findings. Maxwell (1996) says that there are three main groups of analytic options: "memos, categorized strategies, and contextualizing strategies". Coding the data from interviews and observations (categorizing) allowed me to create a set of matrices as a way of conceptualizing the data and the categories.

The goal of coding is to summarise the data and rearrange it into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories that aid the development of theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 1996). A matrix is a visual format that presents information systematically, so the user can draw valid conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Internal validity is increased through the triangulation of these various data sources.

Analysis of data followed Neuman's (1997) suggested process for qualitative data analysis, namely (a) thematic conceptualization, (b) coding.

Detailed descriptions of each of these stages of analysis follows.

- Thematic conceptualization

Concept formation is an important step in data analysis, and begins during the action learning meeting, written journal, and interview. In the case of this study, I identified major concepts regarding tertiary teacher effectiveness, and characteristics of professional development and workplace learning initiatives that appear to facilitate integration of those qualities. During the interview stage, these themes were identified and voiced repeatedly and provided a framework for ensuing discussion. In turn, the concepts that were formulated during interviews established further guidelines and perspectives for analysis of written statements. Although ideas and evidence at this early stage appeared as mutually exclusive, this phase of analysis reflects Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestion that researchers begin the coding process with a tentative list of concepts to be supplemented or discarded as the actual multiphasic coding begins.

A result of this thematic conceptualization stage was a broad categorical organization of teaching improvement and workplace learning features prior to progressing to the next coding analysis phases.

- Coding

Themes were categorized using objectives of the study as a framework from which to start. Using the defined themes and their synonyms, word searches were performed in Microsoft Word's Find feature. Upon identification, the themes were colour-coded. The colour-coded themes were further analysed for common patterns, similarities and differences. To help ensure the reliability of the data, themes and patterns were distinguished if they were evidenced from two different participants and when

appropriate two different sources. Coding was verified by the action learning team members that did not have access to data origin but was concerned to provide a critique which are essentially subjective (codes) of my labels. To help organize this process, a matrix was designed around the identified themes to illustrate frequency of responses and different data sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The matrix's design was specifically organized to identify and categorize each data source by lecturer and theme.

Data were presented within a sequential account of the three cycles of action research and the four stages within each cycle (planning, action, reporting and reflection). The data relating to each section were summarised in relation to the themes identified. Some stages focused on only one or two themes others (often reflection) included several. The evaluation interviews and related data were also thematically analysed.

3.12 Participant Review

At the end of the final analysis the findings were shared with the participants. The participants were asked to further assess the validity of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that having participants in the study check the data helps to verify the data collected and the interpretations of that data.

This chapter has provided justification for the methodology chosen and the method whereby I put the methodology into practice. The next chapter explains the continuing process of the study, which is project implementation.

Chapter 4

Faculty Perspectives on Professional Development

This chapter summarizes the survey responses from faculty staff. Responses were received from all faculties on campus and 42 useable surveys were returned. There were more female than male: 26 respondents were female and 16 respondents were male.

4.1 The Lecturer Profile

Figure 3 shows the distribution of respondents among faculties.

Figure 4 shows most were fairly experienced: 7 respondents had more than 10 years experience and 19 respondents from 5-9 years experience. A further, 12 respondents had 1-4 years experience and 4 respondents less than 1 year experience.

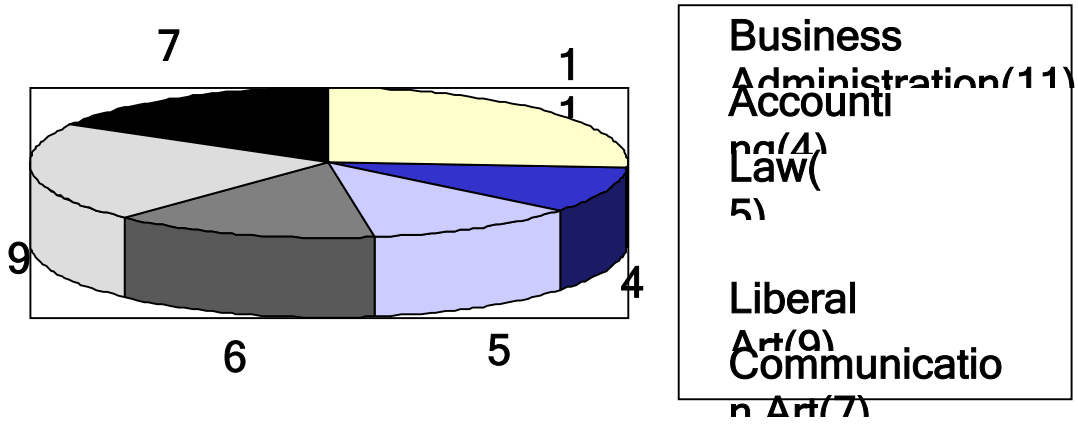


Figure 3. Distribution across faculties

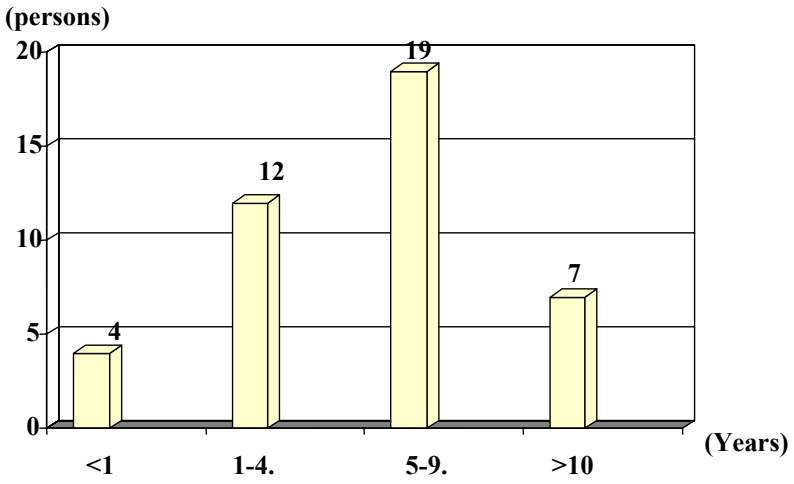


Figure 4. Distribution of teaching experience

The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

The questionnaire firstly sought to elicit information on the aspect of their teaching which faculty staff felt had definitely improved over the last few years and the possible sources of help in bring about that improvement. Section 2 asked faculty staff to identify aspects of their teaching which they would like to improve significantly in the next few years and the possible sources of help in supporting those improvements. Section 3 asked faculty staff to describe an aspect of their professional development which had changed significantly over the last few years.

4.2 Section 1 In this section lecturers were asked to:

(i) nominate aspects of their teaching which they felt had definitely improved over the last few years; and

(ii) to rate the contribution of possible sources of help in bringing about that improvement, from 1 = no importance, to 4 = very important.

4.2.1 Aspects of teaching are defined as follow:

Understanding content is defined as understanding curriculum, course descriptions, aims and objectives of the courses, including how to assist learners in

making connections to what they already know and any new knowledge they learn for integration of the content of the subject area.

Relating to students is defined as providing consultation, recommendations, and communication to students in the areas of curriculum, content or any academic activities requiring interaction with students.

Instructional Planning is defined as designing and arranging academic activities, teaching media, academic papers / texts and teaching methods to assist learners in attaining the objectives of the course.

Organizing / Managing the Classroom is defined as managing a classroom appropriate to learners, teaching methods, teaching activities and subject content.

Teaching Strategies is defined as selecting appropriate teaching and learning strategies that enhance student learning and help learners acquire knowledge, skill and information that they need to meet the objectives/aims of the course.

Assessing student learning is defined as designing tests, examinations, assessment methods that are appropriate to the objectives of the course, teaching methods and learners.

Innovation is defined as changes in product and process of aspects of teaching and learning in curriculum, course, classroom, and in the university environment such as using e-learning, information technology, presentation through power-point programs as teaching media and initiating student-centred approach in course and classroom.

4.2.2 Results

Aspect of teaching which had been improved

Table 1 shows the rank order and number of lecturers nominating particular aspects of their teaching which have been improved. It indicated that innovation was

the aspect in which they had most improved. Learning teaching strategies was ranked second; Organizing / Managing Classroom was ranked third and assessing students was ranked last.

Table 1 Aspects of Teaching Nominated as Improved by Number of Responses and Rank Order

Aspect	Number of Lecturers Responding	Rank Order
1. Understanding Content	21	5
2. Relating to Students	20	6
3. Instructional Planning	28	4
4. Organising/ Managing Classroom	30	3
5. Teaching Strategies	32	2
6. Assessing Student learning	19	7
7. Innovation	34	1

In recent years, the university has introduced information technologies and quality assurance into the academic area. Lecturers have been confronted with information technologies producing instructional media and have introduced information technology into the classroom. ONEC (1999) reported that academic management and teaching organization has to develop curricula and teaching/learning mechanisms to ensure flexibility, diversification to meet demands of learners, and national requirements. It has also required the adoption of innovation and information technology; development of student-centred teaching and promotion of analytical skills, critical thinking and learning motivation. Therefore, lecturers have been challenged to achieve these changes in their profession.

4.2.3 Sources of help for improving the aspects of teaching

The questionnaire also sought to elicit information on the form of learning (called ‘sources of help’) that lecturers believed that had been most useful to them in improving identified aspects of their teaching over recent years. Questions were rated on a four point scale for sources of help in bringing about teaching improvement. The average ratings for each of the questions related to sources of help (the form of learning) are shown in table 3.

The mean ratings of help between 3 and 4 indicates that lecturers perceived this source of help as important to very important and between a rating of 2 and 3 is perceived as moderate. A rating between 1 and 2 indicates limited importance.

The result displayed in table 2 shows that on the job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, formal evaluation of teaching performance were rated as important to very important sources of help for all aspects of lecturers’ teaching over recent years. On-the-job experience and reflection was the highest mean.

Table 2 Aspects of Teaching Improved , the means and Standard Deviations (S.D.)

Sources of Help	Understanding Content		Relating to Students		Instructional Planning		Organising/ Managing Classroom		Teaching Strategies		Assessing Student learning		Innovation	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
- On the job experience and reflection	3.53	0.57	3.33	0.69	3.48	0.67	3.34	0.7	3.42	0.79	3.27	0.72	3.21	0.7
- Observation of other faculty staff	2.62	0.83	2.61	0.83	2.73	0.88	2.52	0.76	2.85	0.87	2.58	0.83	2.58	0.81
- Discussion with colleagues	3.13	0.71	3.27	0.57	3.12	0.65	3.19	0.6	3.31	0.54	3.06	0.66	3.15	0.67
- Formal Evaluation of teaching performance	3.28	0.58	3.22	0.55	3.09	0.59	3.27	0.57	3.44	0.5	3.13	0.71	3.19	0.64
- Consultant with Specialist	2.84	0.68	2.85	0.76	3	0.79	2.7	0.73	2.82	0.73	2.82	0.73	2.88	0.74
- Study for formal award	2.88	0.66	2.85	0.76	2.94	0.7	2.7	0.92	2.79	0.74	2.86	0.75	2.76	0.83
- In service programs provided by the University	2.91	0.73	2.7	0.77	2.79	0.7	2.7	0.85	2.76	0.71	2.91	0.72	2.85	0.71
- Professional development programs outside University	3	0.8	2.82	0.73	2.73	0.8	2.64	0.9	2.73	0.67	2.7	0.85	2.7	0.81

4.3 Section 2 In this section lecturers were asked to:

(i) nominate aspects of their teaching which they would like to improve over the next few years; and

(ii) to rate the importance of possible sources of help in supporting these improvements, from 1 = no importance, to 4 = very important.

4.3.1 Results

Aspects of teaching which staff want to improve.

Table 3 Aspects of Teaching Desired to be Improved by Number of Responses and Rank Order

Aspect	Number of Lecturers Responding	Rank Order
1. Understanding Content	24	5
2. Relating to Students	25	6
3. Instructional Planning	29	4
4. Organising/ Managing Classroom	31	3
5. Teaching Strategies	40	1
6. Assessing Student learning	20	7
7. Innovation	35	2

Table 3 shows the rank order and number of instructors nominating particular aspects of their teaching which they wanted to improve over the next few years. It indicates that they most wished to improve teaching strategies. A change in innovation practice also requires changes in the teaching and learning strategies and management of the classroom. In addition, society is rapidly changing. Universities are being asked to educate the student to higher academic standards than ever before.

It also explains the desire to improve by using appropriate teaching strategies**.** Lecturers must be able to use different teaching strategies to accomplish various goals. However, innovation will still affect the role of the university teacher for the next few years.

When there are important elements of change on campus, lecturers have received some ongoing development to help upgrade their skills and knowledge in order to meet university needs. The implication of change still increased the desire to improve in their teaching strategies in new environment. As indicated in ONEC, in the education reform process in Thailand the current "new approach to teaching and learning" being utilised is the student-centred approach, specially project - and group based activities. This was selected because it provided a significant shift away from the traditional teacher-centred approach (ONEC, 2000, p.39).

4.3.2 Sources of help for improving the aspects of teaching

The questionnaire also sought to elicit information on the form of learning (called 'sources of help') that lecturers felt would be most helpful for them in their future for improvements. The average rating on each of the questions related to sources of help (the form of learning) is shown in table 4.

The results displayed in table 4 show that lecturers selected the same sources of help that they had already used as important to very important: on the job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, and formal evaluation of teaching performance. Lecturers were also rated as important to very important sources of help consultation with specialists, study for formal awards, in-service programs provided by university, professional development programs outside university. On the job experience and reflection is still needed and had the highest mean.

Table 4 Aspects of Teaching to be Improved , the means and Standard Deviations (S.D.)

Sources of Help	Understanding Content		Relating to Students		Instructional Planning		Organising/ Managing Classroom		Teaching Strategies		Assessing Student learning		Innovation	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
- On the job experience and reflection	3.39	0.61	3.55	0.56	3.44	0.62	3.25	0.67	3.48	0.57	3.3	0.68	3.21	0.82
- Observation of other faculty staffs	2.85	0.8	2.79	0.82	2.81	0.69	2.66	0.7	2.85	0.76	2.85	0.72	2.85*	0.79
- Discussion with colleagues	3.28	0.46	3.18	0.64	3.16	0.57	3.44*	0.52	3.12	0.6	3.03	0.64	3.2	0.61
- Formal Evaluation of teaching performance	3.24	0.71	3.22	0.7	3.34*	0.79	3.13	0.61	3.36	0.6	2.97	0.59	3.03	0.77
- Consultant with Specialist	3.18*	0.68	3.08	0.75	3	0.67	2.84	0.72	2.94	0.9	2.94	0.79	3.24*	0.83
- Study for formal award	3.24*	0.66	2.7	0.77	2.84	0.63	2.88	0.71	3.15*	0.68	3.03	0.77	3.24*	0.75
- In service programs provided by the University	3	0.83	2.91	0.68	2.97	0.74	2.94	0.62	3.12*	0.65	3	0.87	3.24*	0.75
- Professional development programs outside University	3.03	0.88	2.79	0.74	3.03*	0.69	2.91	0.69	3.12*	0.65	3.03*	0.81	3.24*	0.79

*This means difference is significant at the .05 level

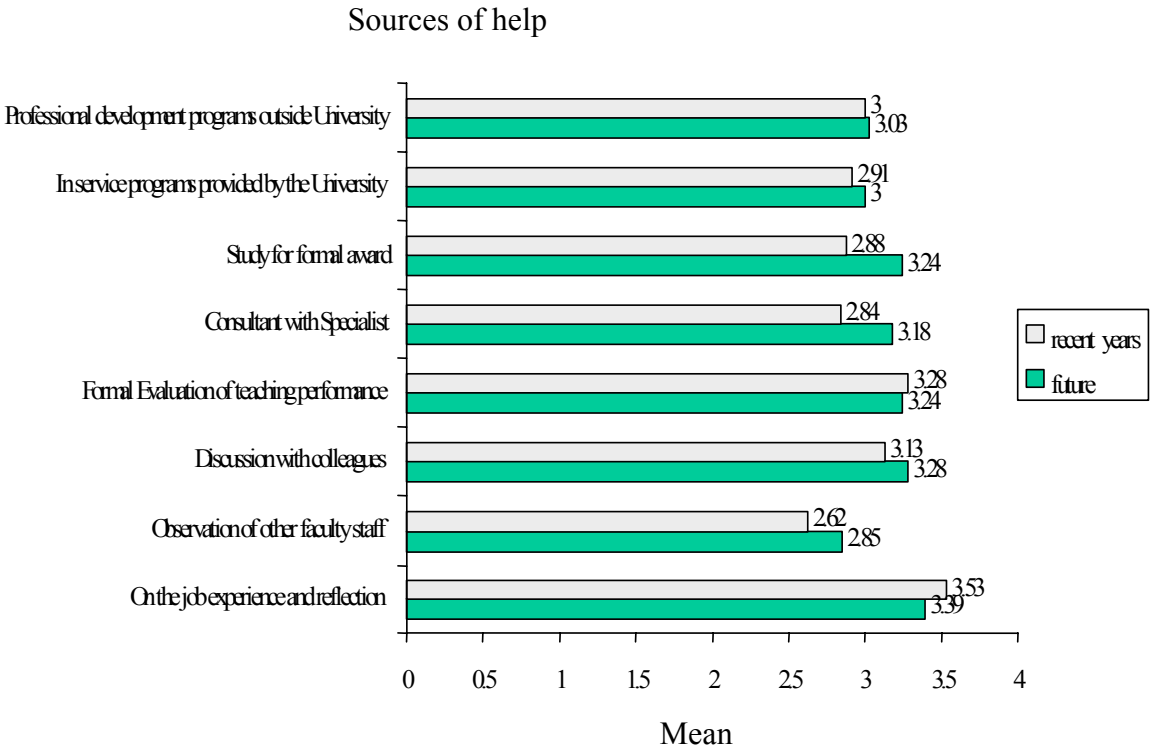
With regard to table 2 and table 4, it was shown that lecturers wish to be helped in their teaching improvement in some ways which differ from the help they had received in the past. Figures 5 to Figure 11 display each aspect of teaching separately and compare the means of sources of help between those nominated as improved in recent years and those desired to be improved in the future.

For table 4, the paired statistical t-test was conducted for comparing the significance of the difference between the means of sources of help at 0.05 level, using a 2-tailed test. The null hypothesis was rejected, if the probability value is less than 0.05.

The results displayed in Table 4 show that there are significant differences between the means of consulting with specialists and study for formal awards and they are significant at 0.05 level. It indicates that consulting with specialists and study for formal awards are more important for lecturers in their future for understanding content. There are also significant differences between the means of formal evaluation of teaching performance and professional development programs outside university. This indicates that formal evaluation of teaching performance and professional development program outside university are more important for lecturers in the future for instructional planning. There is significant difference between the means of discussion with colleagues at 0.05 level. This indicates that discussion with colleagues is more important for lecturers in the future for organizing and managing the classroom. There are significant differences between the means of study for formal award, in service programs provided by university, and professional development program outside university. This indicates that study for formal award, in service program provided by university, and professional development programs outside university are more important for lecturers in the future for learning teaching strategies. There is significant difference between the means of professional development programs outside university. It indicated that professional development programs outside university are more important for lecturers in the future. There are significant differences between the means of observation other faculty staff, consulting with specialists, study for formal award, in service program provided by university, professional development programs outside university. This indicates that observation of other faculty staff, consulting with specialist, study for formal awards,

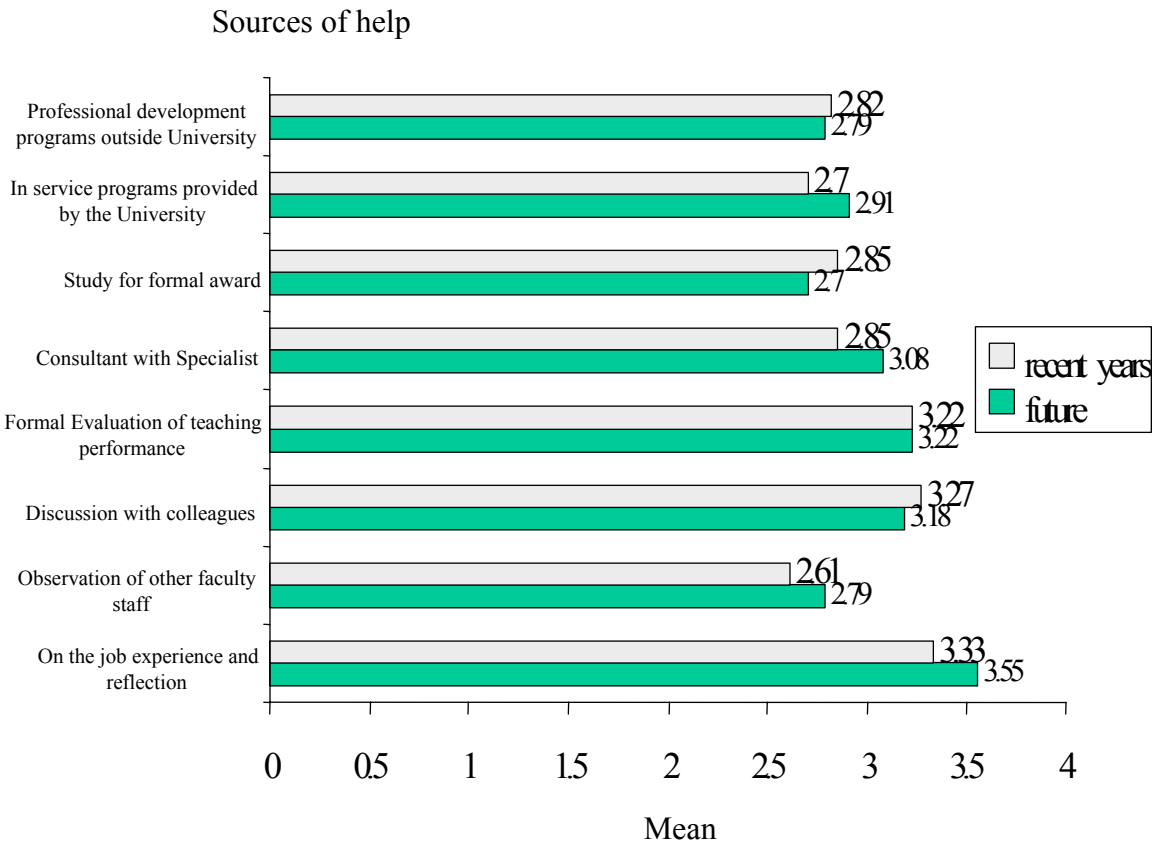
in service programs provided by university, and professional development programs outside university are more important for lecturers in the future for innovation.

Figure 5 : The means of sources of help for Understanding Content



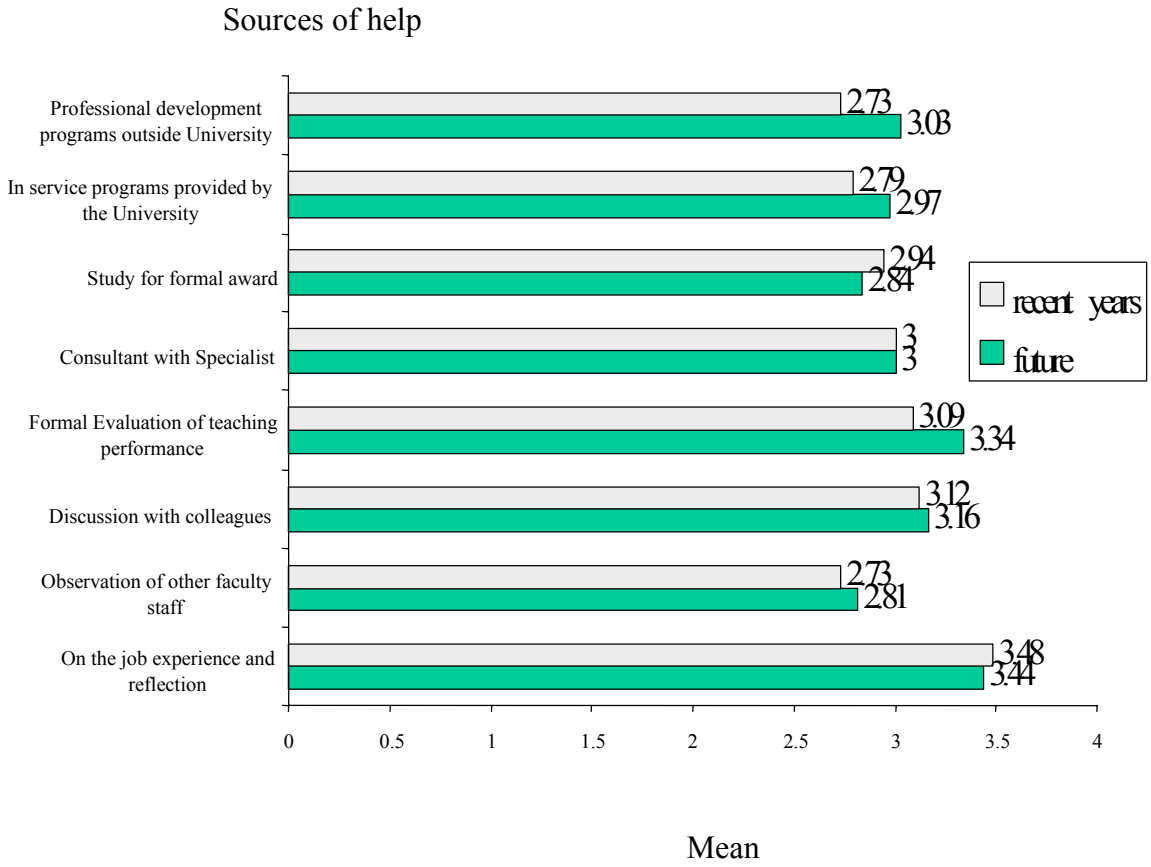
The results displayed in figure 5 show that on the job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, formal evaluation of teaching performance, and professional development programs outside university are consistently rated as important to very important. On-the-job experience and reflection is the highest mean for all forms of learning.

Figure 6 : The means of sources of help for Relating to Students



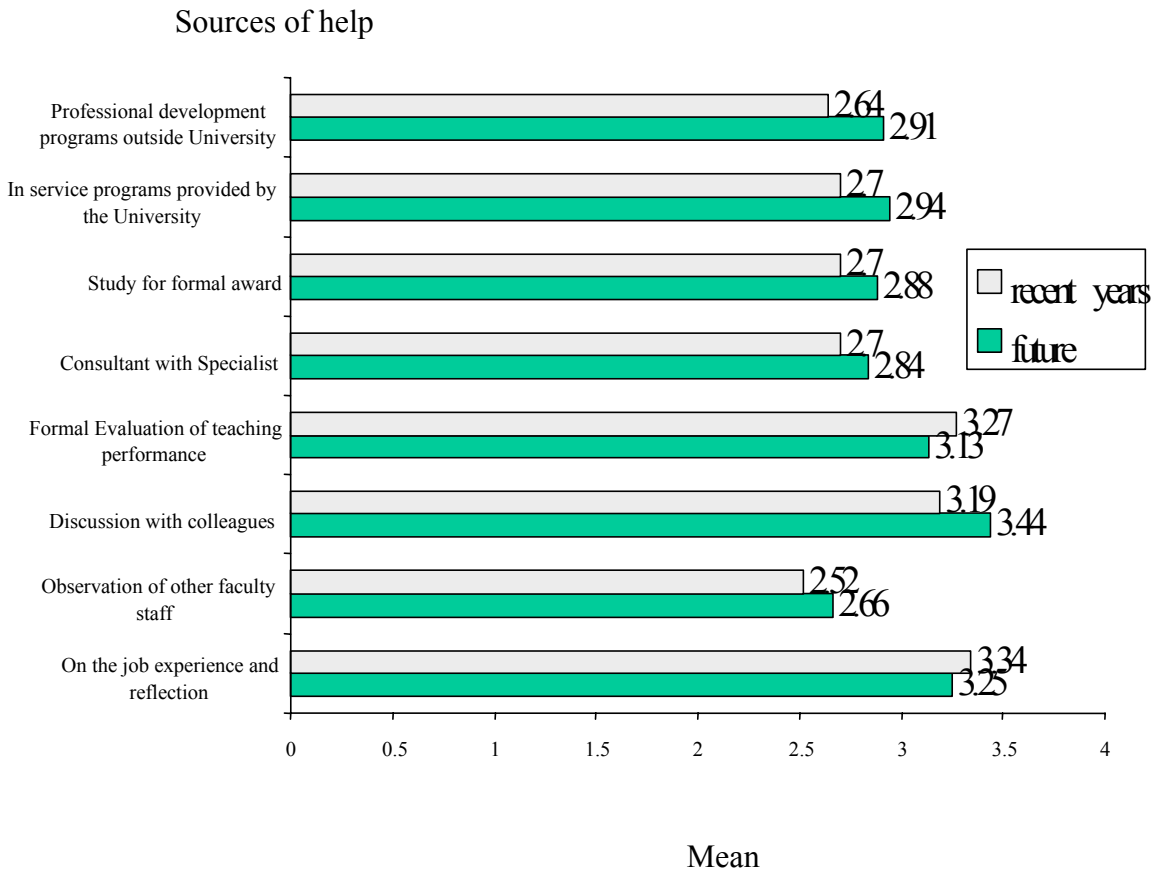
The results displayed in figure 6 show that on-the-job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, and formal evaluation of teaching performance are consistently rated as important to very important. On-the-job experience and reflection is the highest mean for all the forms of learning.

Figure 7 : The means of sources of help for Instructional Planning



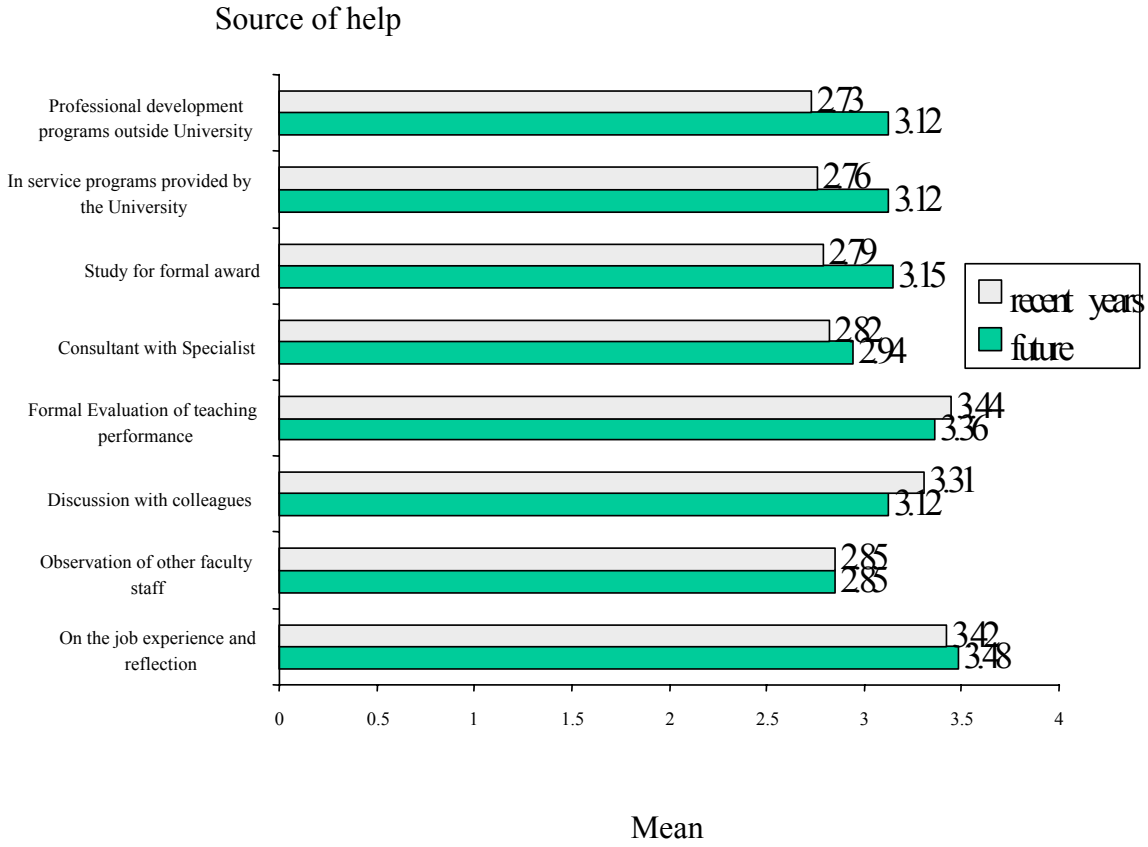
The results displayed in figure 7 show that on-the-job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, formal evaluation of teaching performance, and consult with specialist are consistently rated as important to very important. On-the-job experience and reflection is the highest mean for all the forms of learning.

Figure 8 : The means of sources of help for Organizing and Managing Classroom



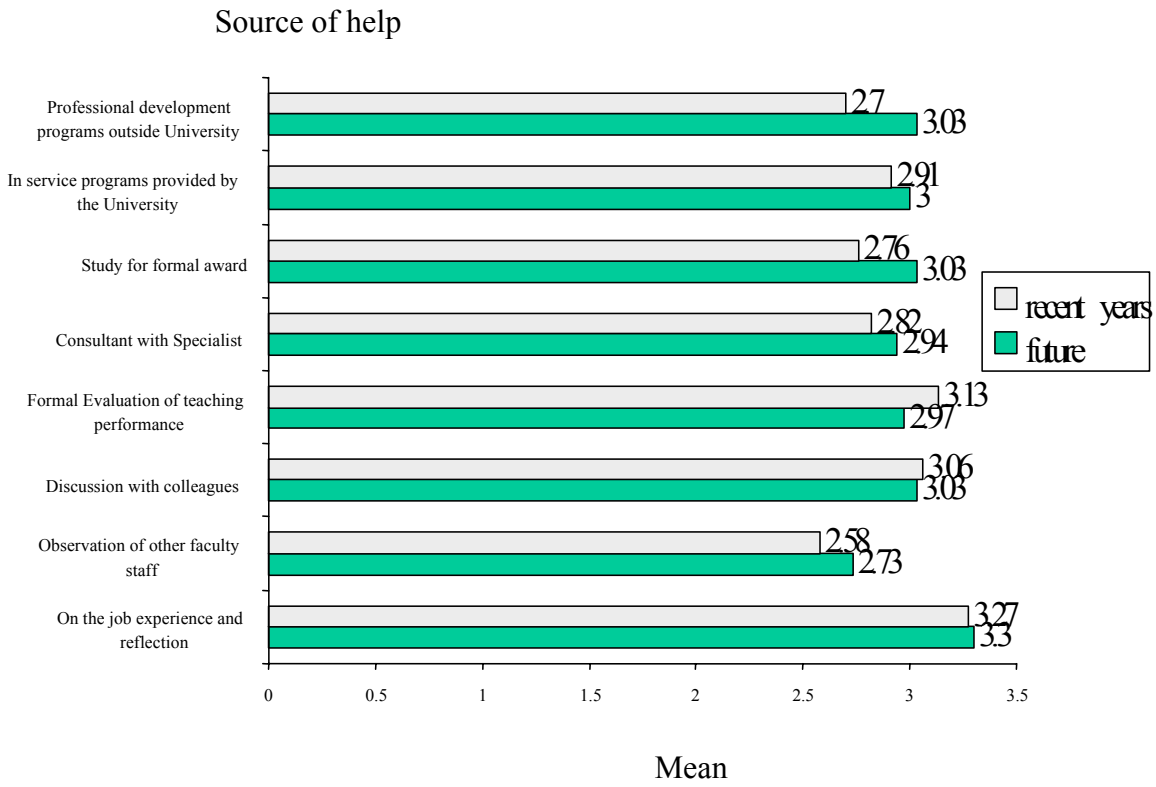
The results displayed in figure 8 show that on-the-job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, and formal evaluation of teaching performance are consistently rated as important to very important. Discussion with colleagues is the highest mean of possible sources of help for organizing classroom.

Figure 9 : The means of sources of help for Teaching Strategies



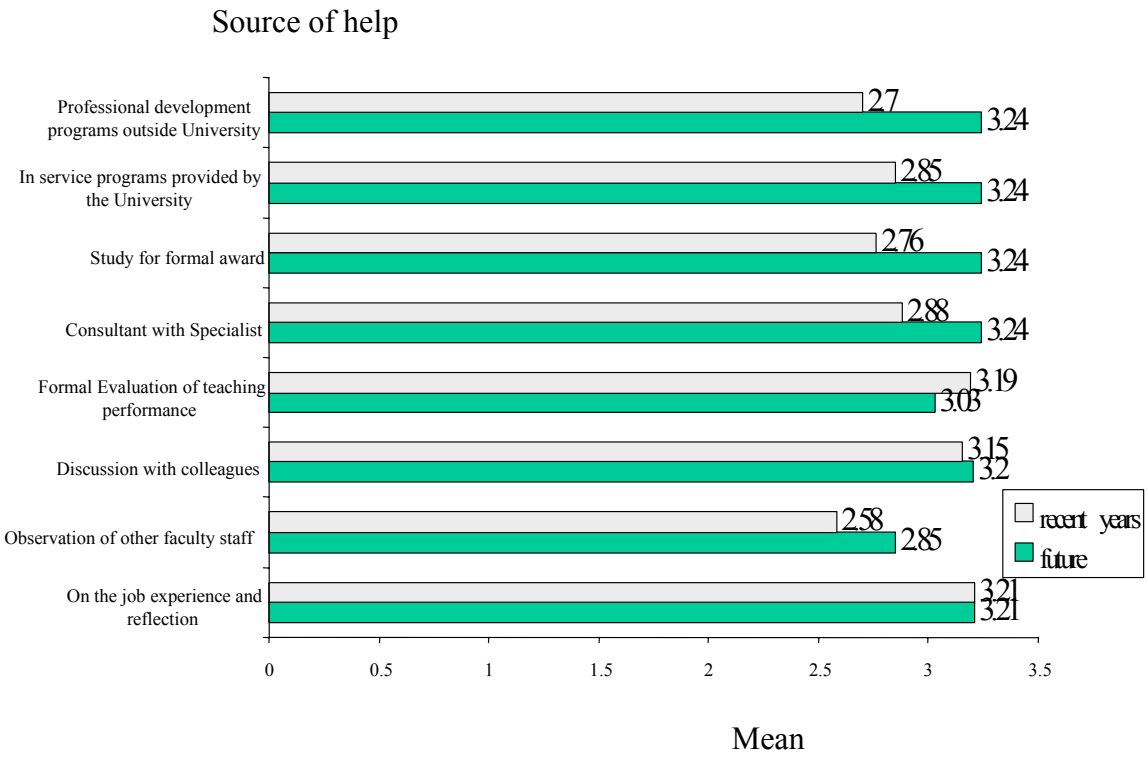
The results displayed in figure 9 show that on-the-job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, and formal evaluation of teaching performance are consistently rated as important to very important. On-the-job experience and reflection is the highest mean for all the forms of learning.

Figure 10 : Sources of help for Student Assessment



The results displayed in figure 10 show that on-the-job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues are consistently rated as important to very important. On-the-job experience and reflection is the highest mean for all the forms of learning.

Figure 11 : The means of sources of help for Innovation



The results displayed in figure 11 show that on-the-job experience and reflection, discussion with colleagues, and formal evaluation of teaching performance are consistently rated as important to very important.

The comparison of means showed that much workplace learning for improving teaching both in recent years and over next few years occurred within the university through lecturers' learning from on the job experience and reflection. In the future, lecturers' learning also shared considerable involvement in increasing formal structured professional learning through consulting with specialists, in service programs provided by university, study for formal award, and professional development programs outside university.

4.4 Open – Ended Questions

In this section lecturers were asked to describe an aspect of their professional development which had changed significantly over the last few years.

4.4.1 The change (how / what changed)

Lecturers indicated that there are varied ways in which professional development opportunities are provided on campus. The major areas of professional development for lecturers have been the improvement of student learning, using student-centred approaches in their classroom, fostering information technologies producing instructional media and introducing information technology into their courses. They also work for the social development of students. A high number of professional development activities involve information technology and fostering a student-centred approach and these areas were a priority for them.

The activities are seen as having benefit for the staff as a whole. The university policy encouraged all lecturers to take part in professional development and provided a budget to pay for in-service programs and to invite expert speakers. Lecturers indicated that changes in professional development over the last few years, included:

- Increased in-service programs

There has been a great deal of in-service education conducted in the campus. In-service activity participation was reported by 70% of the respondents. Lecturers reported that traditional methods are sometimes necessary for some aspects that they need to know about theory or policy. Attendance at seminars and chosen workshops meet their needs.

- Invitations to specialists

This approach included consultants and expert speakers invited to visit the university to discuss problems for staff development days or closure days. Lecturers mentioned as a particularly useful exercise to bring fresh ideas to the university. Almost three quarters of the respondents (72%) reported that they had engaged in this type of session. As a result of these professional development days lecturers reported that they had generally experienced changes in terms of their own knowledge rather that practices or skill level. Lecturers remarked that there is insufficient time available

to do all that is expected or desired. They also didn't have ownership and control of their professional development activities. Therefore, some professional development activities lacked relevance to their work situation.

Lecturers also reported that professional development through working with others (both within their own faculty and in other faculties) was perceived to be highly effective professional development. Professional development for the staff as a whole was less effective because discipline and individual specificity was lacking.

- Interaction between faculties

Fifty percent of respondents reported that they were engaged in interaction between faculties. Some interaction between faculties arose from the implementation of the learning technology policy, whereby IT lecturers have been assisting their colleagues in other faculties and learning areas.

- Collaborative groups

Lecturers noted that much workplace learning occurs within the university through lecturers learning from collaborative groups. Because most of them graduated in their own academic fields, sometimes they needed different knowledge to implement innovative styles of teaching.

- Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning was frequently reported as one of the highly effective professional development approaches because this directly benefited their work. Eighty-five percent of the respondents reported engaging in self-directed learning activities. These were professional development activities such as on learning and reflection and then visits to sites or attending seminars of educational interest, or seminar/workshops organized by professional associations.

4.4.2 Reasons for change (who initiated / what prompted the change?)

The lecturers indicated that the reasons for change are an important determinant of what they learn in the workplace and how they learn. Lecturers believed that to understand the needs of lecturers, it is necessary to understand the way in which the university is changing. The findings identified the following areas as having discernible influence over recent years and which will continue over the next few years. These changing contexts increase the pressure on the system and on individual lecturers to ensure quality teaching in the university. They encompassed the following areas:

- Changes in Thai Higher Education.

Almost three quarters of the respondents (74%) reported the changes in Thai higher education as a turning point in their profession. Lecturers indicated that there has been emphasis to heighten the quality of higher education. Continuous efforts have been made since the announcement of the quality assurance policy. It consists of internal quality assurance and external quality evaluation. So far, enhanced professionalisation and improvement of teaching quality are central to the reform of learning. Lecturers also indicated that the 1999 National Education Act has thus stipulated the development of a new system for the management of teachers, faculty staff and educational personal with a view to enhance professionalism and the quality of the teaching profession. The declaration of the National Education Act in 1999 can be regarded as a very significant turning point in Thai education because it was not only a change in the philosophy of education but also in the methods of delivery and management. Therefore, they pointed out that the university is currently under the key principles and guidelines of this reform.

- International trends

Lecturers reported that the new law along with the impact of international trends and social forces brought change to higher education institutions. Besides, the advent

of educational technology has brought about significant changes in many ways. Seventy percent of the respondents reported that current pressures on tertiary educational systems have led to increasing interest in greater accountability, global competition and concern about standards within the university context. They also pointed out that pedagogic research and academic development are assuming a higher degree of prominence.

- Implementing the policy of the university and campus.

Lecturers indicated that the key factors driving the reform of higher education are integrated into university and campus policy. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that these have led to changing the nature of their teaching. For instance, the campus imposed a quality assurance policy on components of university work. Its has also adopted innovation and information technology, development of curricula and teaching and learning mechanisms to meet the demand of higher education reform. Lecturers revealed that student-centred learning emphasises the active participation of the student in learning, and the development of autonomy and self-direction as prominence grows. The university emphasized reflective, critical and problem-solving abilities as examples of learning skills that a university wants graduates to demonstrate. Others include communication skills, inquiry and research skills, self-efficacy, teamwork, general information technology skills, social and ethical awareness. Therefore, lecturers pointed out that new ways of teaching encourage lecturers as the designers and creators of interesting learning experiences for students, and mentors and supporters as students take on learning challenges. The connections between the policy implement action on the campus and workplace learning appear to be fundamentally important. Lecturers noted that the conditions of workplace learning comprise the environment, situations that affect, support, promote, engage or facilitate the their learning.

- Students

The respondents reported that students are the main reasons for changes. Many lecturers reported that how students approach their learning should be as much a consideration of effective teaching as are content concerns. They relied on student

reaction to guide them in designing the teaching strategies. Lecturers indicated that student approaches to learning are not fixed characteristics and vary according to students' learning environment. Their learning experiences came most effectively from the student in their classroom and judgements about what "works" are formed largely through interaction with their students. Besides evaluation of teaching practice by students was also evidence for lecturers' promotion.

- The staff appraisal process

Three quarters of the respondents (75 %) indicated that one of the criteria for promotion requires lecturers to be engaged in teaching quality assessment. Another criterion is use of feedback from the head of faculty. The demonstration of educationally sound course development, reports on the development of teaching and learning, producing academic papers and the conduct research are also be seen as basic evidence. The university appraisal process was linked to their professional development activities. Lecturers applied their appraisal results to further their personal professional development, as well as to affirm them in their current work. They were interested to keep their knowledge up to date including professional development and they saw these as a necessary parts of their career development and promotional prospects. However, they revealed that their willingness to accommodate to any changes on campus and their motivation to learn have also been important factors.

4.4.3 The factors which have contributed most to that change

- University administrators

Lecturers reported that the role of administrators and other executives was seen as crucial to the development of faculty learning and they were involved in building a learning culture in university. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that administrators have an important role in assigning and supporting lecturers in their endeavours to improve their teaching, in determining workplace learning systems, and in the allocation of funds. The university policy is concerned with the resources and

support of lecturers' learning. This means funds are allocated for expert speakers and consultants to bring fresh ideas to the campus. Some policies provide direct funds to lecturers, others provide release days rather than funds, and others provide in-service programs, or materials for which lecturers pay from their own pockets. Lecturers proposed that if they had more say in what courses were offered or who should conduct them, then professional development activities would be more effective and relevant to their needs.

- Collaboration

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents reported that they learned from each other in various activities, through training and development sessions and informal ways such as discussions in the staff room, and staff meetings. Collaboration was perceived as important and useful in providing opportunities for them to ascertain how their work aligned with their colleagues. They also preferred professional development that provided opportunities for constructive dialogue and interaction with their faculty colleagues.

Lecturers noted that much workplace learning occurs within the university through lecturers learning from collaborative groups. Study groups have been a useful approach to job-embedded learning for them. Groups of lecturers and faculty administrators came together to learn more about a particular topic, such as discipline, curriculum or instructional programs and to share the potential and any challenges to their practices. Lecturers reported that this situation is a facilitative condition for their workplace learning.

4.5 Summary

Lecturers have felt the impact of the university imposed quality assurance system on their work in terms of quality indicators for teaching and learning. They felt that teaching in university requires not only a high level of competence and expertise in the discipline and relevant professional experience but also highly developed appropriate teaching.

Lecturers pointed out that teaching strategies provided greater opportunities for students to work with information and addressed student motivation and interest. Teaching strategies varied according to lecturers and subject discipline. Changing teaching practice also required major attention to control the environment and classroom management in order to increase student motivation, and promote learning activities and interaction with students.

The findings of the survey also indicated that most lecturers' learning occurs through on the job experience and reflection. They recognized the importance of reflection in learning from everyday experience and valuing workplace learning. Lecturers convincingly emphasized collaboration that turns individual learning into shared learning and this is clearly a facilitative condition for their learning. However, lecturers do not deny the need for professional development both inside and outside university and for in service programs provided on campus. Lecturers reported that the sources of help need to be structured with flexible and open-ended approaches to meet individual schedules and learning styles.

These findings support Seldin (1994) who found that successful teaching improvement programs exemplify several common characteristics. More specifically, he advocates that initiatives be designed for long term impact, but have interjections of short term reinforcement. Some of that learning is formal; some is informal, which is useful in helping lecturers get on with the job. Accordingly, Marsick and Watkins (1990) mentioned three broad types of learning that can occur in any workplace, and referred to these as instrumental, dialogic, and self-reflective learning.

4.6 Implications for the Action Learning Phase

The questionnaire results indicated that attention to teaching strategies is the aspect of teaching which lecturers would most like to improve significantly in the next few years. The survey also showed that lecturers considered professional development strategies that succeed in improving teaching share several features. Informal processes of personal development involving reflection and peer interaction were given a high priority**.** This professional development tends to confront not only models of 'teacher training' or 'in-service' but also a model in which lecturers are

regularly engaged in evaluating their practice, and the use of their colleagues for mutual assistance.

Therefore the study in next phase was set to establish a group for a greater involvement of lecturers' workplace learning both individual and group-based. Lecturers were supported to work closely with their colleagues as a faculty team seeking to improve their own and their colleagues' teaching practice. In addition, particularities of context which occurred on campus and in classroom, played an important role in shaping their workplace learning and professional development. Lecturers became learners committed to the context and situations which they face. Accordingly, the methodology adopted for this intervention was designed to provide lecturers with not just a skill-building exercise but also with opportunity for their learning**.**

This group contributed to improving their teaching: participants selected appropriate improvements, how they were going to improve and how they went about and learned how to support workplace learning that contributes to their teaching. These types of activities are considered as fundamental to the processes of *action learning* and *action research*, forms of professional development highly recommended in educational settings (Schratz, 1992; Zuber-Skerritt, 1993).

These two overlapping concepts refer to similar ongoing reflective and usually collaborative cyclic processes of planning, acting, researching and learning undertaken in a supportive work environment by practitioners for the purpose of bringing about improvements (McGill & Beaty, 1992).

Action learning can also help to generate experiential and collaborative learning by reflecting on the key theme for redesign and review the process. Its approach can be a learning vehicle that contributes to improving my lecturers' teaching under our workplace conditions.

Chapter 5

The Action Learning Phase – Cycle I

The purpose of this phase was to establish a group for the greater involvement of faculty in workplace learning to contribute to improvement of their teaching. The survey was conducted to identify concerns in relation to teaching strategies. From this survey, 6 lecturers were chosen from those willing to participate each from a different teaching discipline, covering a range of levels of teaching experience and including those who had indicated a positive experience of workplace learning.

5.1 The Planning Stage Involved:

- Identifying a broad problem area (an issue, challenge, opportunity or initiative) to be addressed through an action learning project.

From the survey phase outcomes and through group discussion among lecturers, the issue selected for investigation was that of improving teaching. Early in the meeting some frameworks were presented to the members of the action learning team by the researcher who also acted as facilitator. The facilitator and project consultant helped these initiatives by clarifying the frameworks. The issues first addressed were as follows:

- What is action learning; and why was it chosen as a basis for the team effort?

- What are the terms of assignment? More specially, where will the team begin its work, where will the team meet, and how much time will the team members be given to devote to the team effort?

- What are the problems, issues and goals that are to be the focus of the team investigation?

- What results or outcomes are expected of the team?

Of course, it was also necessary to motivate the lecturers to view the introduction of workplace learning as a positive and necessary opportunity for the campus. From this initial meeting arose sharing their own teaching experience and reflection on their past actions.

In the implementation of action learning project, all members shared responsibility for deciding upon the action within the project, including participating in the ongoing assessment of the project developments and activities.

There were also several points that should be highlighted in the implementation of action learning project. These point were that the action learning team should:

- Have a clear understanding of the problematic situation to improve and to work together in good interrelationships within the group;

- Should act as co-learners;

- Commitments to participate in order to bring about the desired changes. The team intended to work together and gain new learning experience with other participants in a collaborative and cooperative approach.

5.1.1 Identifying problems

The main concern emanated from the wish to improve teaching. All participants shared the main concern. Although this concern was too broad the action learning group helped to identify smaller issues. It was considered by the lecturers that skills in teaching strategies to promote student learning which emphasized student-centred learning were necessary for the majority of them. They believed that effective teaching strategies continue to have an influence on their work and student learning over the next few years.

The group meeting No.1**,** May 2003 identified critical areas that impact on teaching and that lecturers want to improve.

- Students need to participate as active learners

Lecturers pointed out that students were not actively involved in their subjects, and took little responsibility for their own learning.

> *The students couldn't tackle the problem which occurred repeatedly in my laboratory class although I tried to explain many times (L4, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).*

> *The idea is to get students thinking about the material. This is important, because students who are passive have a decline in concentration after 10-15 minutes in a 60 minute lecture (L2, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).*

> *The students come to class late and have no commitment to take responsibility for their learning (L3, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).*

> *Because of the rapid change in society and technology, the students are not only the receivers of knowledge from the lecturers, but also students should study more by themselves. If they can study by themselves, they will know how to choose, analyze and think independently… though, they stimulate and push the students to take responsibility to their learning. The students still see lecturers as information givers (L6, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).*

- To ground work practice in relevant theory

After graduating from university, students have to engage in their professional jobs. They need knowledge and skills in order to make a contribution to their profession or their work.

> *Students suggested that university should take care to match internship opportunities with their stage of study for example internships in agency creative media, account services departments, and public relations internships that offer writing and desktop publishing opportunities, should all come later in the student's program of study, or at least following the appropriate courses. The importance or relevance of academic preparation should be related to a successful internship and student future career such as internships within ad agency , an understanding of both advertising and media planning concepts and terminology is very important (L3, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).*

- Strategies to promote learning

> *Teaching methods are commonly identified in terms of the situation in which teaching occurs: for example, lecture, practical or laboratory methods rather than learning teaching strategies. A quality learning experience in university must be considered due to adopting student-centred learning as a focused approach for the education reform in Thailand. This reform aims to produce those graduate capabilities that are most valued for a knowledge and information based society (L1, L5, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).*

> *Learners have to engage in the learning process by directing their attention to the learning activities and actually doing things to discover the associations between concepts. Students have to be ready and prepared*

for the learning experiences. The knowledge is linked to the other concepts using an integrated approach (L4, L2, Group meeting No.1, May 2003).

These situations therefore challenged lecturers to look at different teaching formats that encourage students to be self motivated, and to search for material and options. The lecturers had to seek out and apply teaching strategies which were likely to benefit students and make classroom management more enjoyable and integrate dimensions of effective teaching with dimensions of students' learning approaches.

First, and perhaps most important, the action learning members agreed that they must take the time to examine the principles and concepts which promote student learning and upon which student-centred learning techniques are based. It is important to understand the theory which is the basis for, and which in essence sustains, practice. They had to prepare the documents to supplement the analysis and useful materials for students' studies.

Between meeting 1 and meeting 2

The group investigated proven student-centred learning activities developed by colleagues and brainstormed with facilitators of the action learning team and the consultant / faculty developer to help lecturers identify their teaching strengths and areas for development and suggest useful ideas for effective teaching about the relevance of activities for their courses. The facilitator, consultant and faculty developer acted as a critical group for the action learning team members.

The lecturers shared their own experience of teaching activities which they proposed with their team mates before next meeting. Some of them referred to research findings professional reading and internet searches to keep up-to-date with developments in their subject-specialisation. Some lecturers referred to knowledge that they got from attending conferences provided by particular professional associations, and others from seminars /

workshops both in university and outside university. Then, lecturers reported that they integrated this knowledge with their teaching experience.

Workplace learning

Lecturers got recommendations and advice from the educational consultant prior to instituting their teaching strategies. They reported that the shift to teaching techniques must be well thought out, planned and implemented in order to ensure that the strategies will be successful.

> *In preparing lecture notes, we read, compared what we have read with our experiences, synthesized the information into coherent notes, and developed examples that illustrate the concept (L2, L3, Group meeting, No.2, May 2003).*

> *The prior experience needs consideration that may be an emphasis on exposing our teaching methods for students to reflect on learning strategies (L1, L4, Group meeting, No.2, May 2003).*

> *We just basically shared what we were doing and stimulated each other in our ideas and things we could try next or problems that we had and we did some professional reading and shared that. The exercise was borrowed from the educational research, and then modified for the course (L5, L6, Group meeting, No.2, May 2003).*

Meeting 2, May 2003

There are numerous education strategies from which to choose with respect to promoting student learning and engaging students in student-centred learning. The action learning team suggested that their teaching improvement would be conducted as follows:

a) The intent in selecting an educational strategy is to take the student out of a passive role and create an environment where students can practice the skills that need to be developed. Usually, this means promoting student learning and student-centred learning. Almost all the activities and teaching strategies were done in the form of group-based learning, encouraging active engagement in the learning task.

b) The group examined the need to actively involve students in the educational process and believed that the benefits to students included an increased ability to utilize the cognitive skills of objectivity, creative thinking, judgment, interpretation, and problem solving. They believed that if students are to develop these skills effectively, they must be actively engaged with the subject and learning process. Under these circumstances, students are more likely to undertake a deep approach to learning and improve their academic performance.

c) Lecturers proposed that the teaching process is a communication process. The students can learn through various parts; one part from the lecturers, the other part form the instructional media, textbook, information technology and the rest from many sources outside the university. So, the role of lecturers and the teaching strategies have to change according to the situations of teaching, class size, and characteristics of learners**.**

5.1.2 Detail about how individual lecturers planned new teaching strategies

Each lecturer proposed that the activities and teaching strategies vary according to the needs and characteristics of their teaching discipline. Lecturers began the process by determining what knowledge within the discipline is worth knowing and therefore worth the students' effort. Once the action learning team members had determined what he or she expected the student to accomplish, appropriate learning objectives should be formulated.

> *In the past, we had used a teacher-centred approach with its emphasis on the teaching of existing practices and rules, with we being the primary communicator of information in the classroom. The approach has evolved so that it is a much more student-centred approach with an emphasis on active student participation and active learning related to new professional roles, responsibilities, and skills that will be required (Group meeting No 2, May 2003).*

Some lecturers incorporated procedures into the modified lecture format; however, care was taken to ensure that the educational process was successful. Alternatively, other lecturers elected to discard the lecture format and provide alternative learning strategies in a student-centred approach to active learning for their students. Within each of these approaches lecturers found great variation in methods used in the classroom. Each of these approaches and methods has one thing in common: the students have the primary responsibility for learning.

5.2 The Action Stage

The classroom accommodates diverse teaching styles. Each style can reflect the subject matter being taught, their personality, and their students' learning styles.

It was apparent that some conflict in dealing with their issues was likely to occur. Regarding the discussion becoming emotional, I as the facilitator attempted to bring the discussion into the situation of improvement. However, they understood that this conflict was common in a project, and realized that it would be better to discuss like a critical friends. By the end of meeting, members of the team appeared to develop cohesion as well as interdependency within the members. Team members also proposed that a project consultant, faculty developer, and facilitator played an important role in advice on their strategies including discussion and sharing experiences among the teams. They felt that this could also contribute to their acceptance on their strategies.

5.2.1 Case 1: Accounting

L1 taught in the first-year course Accounting 1, which is a compulsory foundation course in the Faculty of Business Administration and Faculty of Accounting. It is the first of a series of courses in accounting for students who intend to major in accounting, but it might be the only accounting course taken by students who major in other areas. The course focused on developing understanding and technical skills associated with fundamental aspects of accounting. L1 had 5 years of teaching experience.

> *Students varied greatly in background and experience. Some came to university directly from high school or vocational school, but others had been in the workforce for some years. Some had already studied accounting at school or had experience of it at work, but it was a completely new field of study for others. Some students took the course only because it was a compulsory foundation course in their degree, and they wanted just to pass it with as little effort as possible. Others took it because they intended to major in accounting, and wanted to understand the principles and become proficient in the processes of accounting (L1, Group meeting No.2, May 2003).*

The purpose of the learning strategies

The lecturer from the Faculty of Accounting (L1) wanted to teach some strategies in the context of the accounting course that would help students become more proficient learners. He wanted to encourage the students to adopt a deeper approach to their learning, and focus more on understanding the subject matter. He also wanted students to realize that accounting involved communication between people as well as processing of data. To help him achieve these goals he decided to teach students using study groups, analyzing a question and planning a response, explaining ideas, and learning from feedback.

> *It is perceived obligatory to apply strict teacher-directed methods to ensure that students are appropriately exposed to the rules and standards identified with the profession. However, in some classroom settings students review the in-class material using a PowerPoint presentation to enhance my teaching and learning. These include a mixture of short multi-media presentations developed by professional organizations, short presentations by students (also utilizing computer assistance via power point) open discussions of issues by all students, and discussions of assigned cases or reading. Students work in teams on cases and on a team project (L1, Written journal, May 2003).*

5.2.2 Case 2: Business Administration

L2 taught in the second-year course Management, which is a compulsory foundation course in the Faculty of Business Administration. The course focused on developing understanding fundamental aspects of business management. L2 had 1 year of teaching experience.

> *Students varied greatly in background, Many expected to play the role of the passive learner -- one who expects the information to flow from the lecture into their notebooks. Some students took the course only because it was a compulsory foundation course in their degree, and they wanted just to pass it with as little effort as possible. Others took it because they intended to major in management, and wanted to understand the principle and become proficient in the processes of management (L2, Group meeting No.2, May 2003).*

The purpose of the learning strategies

L2's concern was that getting her students involved in activities in the classroom also required them to assess their own understanding. Rather than allowing them to rest comfortably with surface knowledge, it forces them to develop a deeper understanding.

> *If you are facing a large class filled with 40 students, active learning exercises can take many forms, and can range from a minute to an hour. Students first work on the given problem individually, then compare their answers with a partner and synthesize a joint solution. The pairs may in turn share their solutions with other pairs or with the whole class. Still another in-class strategy is Jigsaw, where each team member takes responsibility for one aspect of the problem in question. The team member goes over the material they are responsible for and plans how to best teach it to their group. (L2, Written journals, May 2003).*

5.2.3 Case 3: Communication Arts

The lecturer (L3) taught in the third-year course Writing for Public Relations, which is a comprehensive course in the Faculty of Communication Arts. The course focused on developing understanding and technical skills associated with fundamental aspects of writing news and advertising. L3 had 3 years of teaching experience.

> *Students do not have good writing skills for the mass communication profession. After editing innumerable student papers filled with fundamental errors I see more and more mass media students are writing with imprecision and gruesome style. Some students fail to master news writing, and have a difficult time understanding the importance of writing news releases or newspaper editorials in the proper form (L3, Group meeting No2, May 2003).*

The purpose of the learning strategies

> *I always taught by including practical examples which could be easily adapted for students to write news by themselves and I read and critically review their papers. Even so, students cannot resist the temptation to write for public relations as they would write an essay. Instead of building on what they learned in news writing, they regress to wording composition and lose the basics in the process (L3, Written journal, May 2003).*

L3 wanted to redesign her writing course placing more emphasis on basics associated with Press style.

> *I worked in public relations more than 5 years (nearly 10 years) before I began teaching the news and public relations writing course. I have seen the problem from all angles and agree with the*

professionals: students need a strong mechanical foundation in writing if they are going to build successful careers (L3, Group meeting No.2, May 2003).

The students must not only produce quality writing, but they must do so with challenging assignments that require them to quickly, but thoroughly, think through a situation, reflect on the ramifications of what they will write, and seriously consider how their writing will be accepted by their public, as well as their employer or client, all on a deadline.

Effective writing requires well-developed skills in planning, critical thinking which students need help to develop. L3's modification was to ask students to bring their drafts of their paper to class for anonymous peer review. This would place an emphasis on the need to develop and apply education strategies.

I called upon cooperative learning to redesign my writing courses, placing more emphasis on composition and associated press style. Cooperative learning techniques seemed appropriate since I also desired their benefits: additional active learning, increased student self-esteem, a strong sense of individual responsibility and group responsibility and cooperation among students (L3 Written journal, May 2003).

At the beginning of the semester, students place themselves in groups of four. After the groups are formed, each member is appointed a 'master' of their proficiency. Groups must have one of each master. Students then give the lecturer a list of group members with master appointments. Each master is responsible for editing the work of other group members in their master area for at least three weeks. Then they rotate. The process normally takes about 15 minutes in class. Group numbers can be higher or lower

as long as they are large enough for students to get adequate feedback from other group members. For example, if the lecturer notices that student papers are wordy and unclear, a master of clarity and brevity can be added to the group. A master can be created for almost any writing deficiency. By the end of the semester, every student has focused on all areas-and is thereby a 'master' of them all (L3, Written journal, May 2003).

5.2.4 Case 4: Informatics

L4 taught in the second-year course "Creating Basic Software Programs". The course focused on developing understanding and technical skills associated with algorithm tracing and demonstration software programs. L4 had 11 years of teaching experience.

I have been teaching theory of computation for a number of years in the sophomore year. My students have taken theory of computation in the first semester of their sophomore year, after having completed a one semester computer science overview course. The course was taught with a typical lecture style of presentation. Students did regular homework assignments, took three semester exams, and a final exam At the sophomore level, the course is more practically oriented than proof based (L4, Group meeting No2, May 2003).

Most teaching used the lecture format followed by laboratory sessions. Students had been divided into small groups and asked to present or report their analysis of a particular issue. This involved setting group tasks directed towards producing group work. Students were randomly assigned to groups of between 6 or 8 members to work on a variety of problem solving and writing group tasks.

...Weak students working individually are likely to give up when they get struck; working cooperatively, they keep going... (L4, Group meeting No2, May 2003).

The purpose of the learning strategies

The value of active learning is already realized and implemented through laboratories, or in computer science, through programming projects. The ideas presented here are to expand this to include activities in the classroom that replace part of the lecture through generic techniques for active learning in computer science and application of some of these techniques to a theory of computation course.

Algorithm Tracing

Instead of tracing the execution of an algorithm in a lecture, I break the students into groups and have them trace the algorithm. For example, to compare sorting algorithms I break up the class into groups of four students each. I assign one student as the algorithm tracer, one to keep track of the variable values, another to record the number of additions / multiplications performed, and the last to record the changes to the list. By providing each team with transparencies and markers, teams can easily display their answers to the rest of the class. By then running an implementation of the algorithm, group results can be quickly compared with the actual answer (L4, Written journal, May 2003).

Demonstration Software

In a classroom with a projection unit connected to a computer system running demonstration software, the professor has a powerful tool to have students interact with the ideas of computer science. By dividing

the students into groups, you can ask them to predict what will happen to the output based on changes to the input or the algorithm. This set up also allows students to formulate 'what if' questions as they are trying to understand an idea. For example, students trying to understand the nature of recursive algorithms can see the effect of input on the results. A large amount of software of this type has been developed for a number of areas of computer science. This is readily available through the internet (L4, Written journal, May 2003).

5.2.5 Case 5: Law

L5 taught in the fourth-year course in Criminal Law. The course focused on developing understanding aspects of justice and the processes of Criminal Law. L5 had 7 years of teaching experience.

L5 taught both a day-program and mature aged students in an evening program. They studied law for various reasons. They came from a range of backgrounds, with different of experiences about the subject under consideration. Many of the younger students seemed content to use a surface approach to learning, so that they focused on learning facts and procedures that were necessary to satisfy the assessment requirements of the course. The older students were more likely to see learning as qualitative and to focus on trying to understand the subject matter.

Beyond teaching general principles in the subject matter of course, I used cases to illustrate legal concepts. These cases came from casebook selections, the content of any supplementary materials. It helped students to understand how the legal principles apply in real situations. Although lecturing is as good as any other method for imparting information to students, it does not promote thinking (L5, Group meeting No.2, May 2003).

However, students need to develop the skills of case synthesis and analytical thinking which are essential to their professional success. The students need the lecturer to guide them through legal analysis because they have to so it on their own in the future. So, the process of helping students gain the independent analysis should take place at all levels of teaching. The process of guiding students toward that independence of thought is one of teaching's great challenges (L5's written journal, May 2003).

The purpose of the learning strategies

The main aims of the learning strategies were to help students be analytical and critical in their legal approach and to develop their understanding through inquiry and systematic analysis. These aims were to be achieved by using several other methods such as problem solving.

> *I have moved away from the traditional case method and use a problem method of teaching. In this approach, the reading assignment might begin with some introductory material, then a problem is posed. This problem states a fact pattern with a legal issue to be resolved. The problem is then followed by cases and note materials for the students to consider in solving the problem. Working on such cases trains students to exercise thinking skills and prepares them to engage in similar thinking on homework assignments and tests. Still another strategy is for the students to work on problems in pairs, with one pair member functioning as problem-solver and the other as listener. The problem solvers verbalize everything they are thinking as they seek a solution; the listeners encourage their partners to keep talking and offer suggestions or hints if the problem solvers get stuck. Then, the roles are reversed for the next problem. They work in pairs to guess (estimate) what the answers might be (to plan how you could determine the answers). The textbook also guides student consideration of the problem with specific questions about applying the case and note*

materials to the facts of the problem… Beyond the casebook makes a class come to life. I guide the discussion by asking students to think in advance about the questions that can effectively motivate them to watch for the answers in the rest of the class period (L5, Written journal, May 2003).

5.2.6 Case 6: Liberal Arts

Lecturer (L6) taught in a first-year foundation course. This put emphasis on the students' acquisition of a comprehensive view and was the foundation for other courses about daily life and the understanding of society. L6 had 10 years of teaching experience.

The purpose of the learning strategies

Large class teaching is often thought of as the same as lecturing, while I want to encourage students to move away from the idea of lecturing as passive students towards the idea of student-centred and active learning. The traditional approach to team building in academe is to put students together and to let them "work it out" on their way to solving a problem. A better approach is to prepare the students with some instructional elements that will generate an appreciation of what teaming (as opposed to just working in groups) involves, and to foster the development of interpersonal skills that aid in team building and performance (L6, Written journal, May 2003).

To achieve these aims, she decided to teach students the following learning strategies.

I set the topics for reading and report and recommend the documents and the further search for knowledge concerning the matter that the learners have studied. I give the learners an opportunity to work as a group to plan. Finally, I summarize the result of the study in terms of

content and stimulate students to share their experiences each other. One submission was made by each group the same mark being awarded to all members who were required to sign a declaration of equal contribution to the report. All team members should feel that they have unique roles to play within the group and that the task can only be completed successfully if all members do their part. I randomly call on students to present their teams' solutions. The exercises can range from short questions to extensive problem - solving activities (L6, Written journal, May 2003).

Student-centred techniques – a summary

I can identify the following as suggestion by group members for encouraging student-centred learning:

1) Encouraging deep learning

Lecturers should encourage students to adopt a deep approach to their learning (Gibbs, 1992; Ramsden, 1992). This becomes even more important when student-centred approach are implemented in the classroom.

2) To take a deeper approach to learning some of the teaching strategies should be introduced as follows:

- Study groups;
- Work in pairs and use of the Jigsaw technique;
- Problem solving and problem based learning; and
- Case analysis.

5.2.7 How the group assisted each other in identifying and using student-centred learning

Each lecturer proposed that the activities and teaching strategies vary according to the needs and characteristics of their teaching discipline. The action learning team provided participants with opportunities to pool their knowledge and share learning tasks, question each others' views and ideas including providing a demonstration of their own teaching for discussion purposes. The group investigated proven student-centred learning activities developed by colleagues and brainstormed with facilitators of the action learning team, the consultant, and a faculty developer to help them identify their teaching strengths and areas for development and suggest useful ideas for effective teaching. The facilitator, consultant and faculty developer acted as a critical group for the action learning team and acted as their critical friends. Team members reported that the project consultant, faculty developer, and facilitator played an important role in advice on their strategies. Discussion and sharing experiences among the teams also contributed to their acceptance of their strategies (Written journals, May 2003).

Some members felt uncertain about the success of their strategies, and whether participation could still develop within the team. However, they realized that communication amongst the team including ways to help the students to understand the implementation of student-centred approaches as an important factor to success and for better understanding about the purposes of the project (Field notes, May 2003).

5.3 The Reporting Stage (What happened when the planned action was implemented?)

Meeting No.3, July 2003 was attended by the research team and critical group (facilitator, consultant, and faculty developer). At first, I began the meeting by reviewing the previous meeting and the recent actions. The action learning spiral was used as a tool to evaluate our actions, to reflect upon our learning experience and to revise a plan for the next action. We reviewed the actions and progress of change. Some obstacles impacted

negatively on the attainment of project goals. The members also presented meaningful results from their classroom to the action learning meeting.

Some members of the research team brought forth the issue of evaluating our practices. We shared our experience in an open-air**** situation. Some members of the research team acknowledged that their teaching strategies had led the students to becoming passive learners. But some other team members contested this opinion. These team members argued that they had already done their best with their students' practices and that students were responsible for achieving their own expectation from the learning (Written journals, July 2003).

5.3.1 Some general points agreed on by participating staff;

- Students vary in their responses to student-centred activities, because of encounters with established norms and the culture of student learning, and because they have a diversity of backgrounds, experiences and a variety of knowledge about the subject under consideration (Group meeting No.3, July 2003).

- Class size

Student-centred learning with classes of over thirty students may not be easily achieved. The student response was variable - the level of interaction generally decreased with distance from the front of the room (Group meeting No.3, July 2003).

Positive outcomes

There was a significant change in learning performance in that the students were very responsive to the new learning situation**.** The student-centred approach offered several advantages over more conventional method. Asking questions or discussion with the class as a whole usually produces either an embarrassing silence (especially in large classes) or answers volunteered by two or three students - the same students every time.

Calling on students individually often creates an atmosphere of tension in the classroom, with many students worrying more about whether lecturers will single them out than about what you are teaching. On the other hand, when students are asked to generate answers in pairs or small groups, most of them get to work without feeling threatened and lecturers get all the responses they want (Group meeting , July 2003).

Negative outcomes: Lecturers perception of student responses:

- Most students have never been taught to solve open-ended problems or think critically or formulate problems, so that the first time you assign such an exercise they will probably do it poorly.

> *Students in my class quite keep silent and were not self-confident to Discuss. Some of my students just don't seem to get what I'm asking them to do - they keep trying to find "the right answer" to open- ended problems, they still don't have a clue about what a critical question is (L2, Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

> *Students responded that they can't learn very well when they're under the pressure of being asked by the lecturer to answer any question. I would like to have my own time and space to think about what I am learning (L4, Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

> *The use of any form of collaborative technique tends to diminish significantly in the content driven accounting where it is perceived obligatory to apply strict teacher-directed methods to ensure that students are appropriately exposed to the rules and standards identified with the profession. Much more emphasis is therefore placed on the use of practice drills, rote-memorization and competency attainment measured by written tests and final examination (L1, Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

- When lecturers tried student-centred approaches in their class, many of the students weren't ready to take part.

> *Students who were not interested in the approach suggested that they preferred the conventional approach to the new one, because they just did what was instructed by the lecturers. In the new approach students needed to be more active and creative. These unsatisfied students, expressed that the new approaches required much more energy and additional work than before (L3, Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

> *I'm having a particularly hard time getting my students to work in teams. Some students find the responsibility for learning difficult, especially where it involves group work (L5, Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

> *Cooperative learning tends to be the hardest student-centered method to sell initially, especially to high academic achievers and strong introverts (L2, Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

- The activities of the learning approach were too time consuming and too little content was covered.

> *Early in the semester students felt that they was spending too much time on the learning strategies and not enough time covering the subject matter. At first we were hesitant and almost apologetic in teaching the strategies, for we expected that most students would have covered them at university (Group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

5.3.2 How the group assisted individual and group contribute to improve strategies

An important source of learning for lecturers was their fellow lecturers. They can learn from each other in planned activities and informal ways such as discussions in the staff room. On-the-job experience and reflection was useful learning. Many lecturers recognized the importance of reflection in learning from everyday experience. Frequently, during each day clusters of lecturers met together and informally discussed in the staff room or at lunch time (Written journals, June 2003).

The action learning team provided participants with opportunities to pool their knowledge and skills, share learning tasks, review and reflect on their learning and question each others' views and ideas. During the reporting stage, after group meeting No.3, some lecturers exchanged their experiences to reinforce the effectiveness of their teaching with other team members.

- To minimize resistance to any student-centred method

> *I try to persuade the students from the outset of cooperative learning that you are neither playing a game nor performing an experiment, but teaching in a way known to help students learn more and understand better (L3,group meeting No.3,July 2003).*

Persuading students that group work is in their interest is only the first step in making this instructional approach work effectively**.** The lecturers must also structure group exercises to promote positive interdependence among team members, assure individual accountability for all work done, facilitate development of teamwork skills, and provide for periodic self-assessment of group functioning. Techniques for achieving these goals are suggested by Johnson *et al*. (1991a), Felder and Brent (1994), and many other books and articles in the recent education literature**.**

- If students "hitchhike", in which they do not actively participate in their assignment, homework, presentation, or projects to groups.

This is always a danger, although students determined to get a free ride will usually find a way whether the assignments are done individually or in groups. In fact, cooperative learning that includes provisions to assure individual accountability such as individual tests on the material in the group assignments-cuts down on hitchhiking (Johnson *et al.* 1991a,b). The lecturers exchanged ideas about this as follows:

> *Students who don't actually participate in the homework will generally fail the tests, especially if the assignments are challenging (as they always should be if they are assigned to groups) and the tests truly reflect the skills involved in the assignments (L3, group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

> *One way to get groups off to a good start is to have them formulate and write out a set of team standards and expectations, sign it, make copies for themselves, and turn in the original to you. As the course proceeds, have them periodically evaluate how well they are working as a team to meet those standards and what they might do to work more effectively. You may invite teams with serious problems to have a session in your office. If they do, try to help them find their own solutions rather than telling them what they should do (L6, group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

> *Taking a few minutes in class to focus on critical teamwork skills can make a major difference in how groups function. Periodically select an important activity like brainstorming or resolving conflicts and offer tips in class on effective ways to carry out the activity. An effective technique is to present a short scenario describing a common problem and brainstorm solutions with the class (L4, group meeting No.3, July 2003).*

- Require students to assess their own understanding

L5 suggested that getting her students involved in activities in the classroom also required them to assess their own understanding. Rather than allowing them to rest comfortably with a surface knowledge, it forces them to develop a deeper understanding.

> *Active learning exercises can take many forms, and can range from a minute to an hour. Students first work on the given problem individually, then compare their answers with a partner and synthesize a joint solution. The pairs may in turn share their solutions with other pairs or with the whole class. Still another in-class strategy, Jigsaw, is where in each team a member takes responsibility for one aspect of the problem in question. The team member goes over the material they are responsible for and plans how to best teach it to their group. After adequate time has been given, the students return to the teams and bring their expertise to bear on the assigned task. Positive interdependence is fostered because each student has different information needed to complete the task (L5, group meeting, July 2003).*

Lecturers exchanged experiences that could reinforce the effectiveness of their teaching with other team members. I observed that less experienced lecturers are usually but not always the youngest staff. Some of them are more experienced from non-teaching jobs such as L3. She worked in public relations more than 5 years (nearly 10 years). The study found that some teaching strategies came from experiences in their previous work. Therefore, they have different needs and concerns from other beginning lecturers (Field notes, July 2003).

5.4 The Reflection Stage

Attending the meeting were the research team, facilitator, consultant and faculty developer. At first, I began the meeting by simply reviewing the previous meeting. The action learning spiral was used as a tool to evaluate our actions to reflect upon our learning experience and to revise a plan for the next action.

Even though the project showed progression indicated by lecturers and from students' responses, the action learning team pointed out that the main issues in the implementation of the project were:

- Maintaining active participation was not easy.

- Implementation of a given learning approach should be done gradually - not drastically as it required time to make participants in the learning process accustomed to such an approach.

- There were some barriers affecting this implementation such as some students still being affected by the teacher-centred approaches. The team members recommended that "changing always required time".

- Communication was the key issue in the new approach that influenced the activities. For example, the lecturers should communicate with students about the changes and evaluate the changes to ensure that they were to be reached.

Issues recorded by the research team between meeting 1 and meeting 3 were:

a) The lecturers became more aware of students' needs and activities and saw the need for the integration of strategies and subject matter. It should be apparent that it is not only necessary to modify our education strategies, but lecturers must be aware of, and make changes in, their attitudes towards teaching and students. In order to

facilitate students in their task of developing autonomy in the educational process, lecturers must understand students' views, desires, interests, and relationships which develop as the result of this acceptance. Interpersonal skills and relationships become important factors in the learning environment. Once again, students are readily able to discern whether or not the lecturers are committed to the process, and they will respond accordingly. In fact;

> *We've really come to understand how the students' pace varies. We knew this before of course, but I really know now! I think I tend to overestimate what most students can do (Group meeting, July 2003).*

b) Some lecturers recognized that if a lecturer was to be successful, they would have to teach the strategies in a way that allowed students to see their relevance and encourage them to use the strategies in their learning. The members of the action learning team found that lecturers work in different situations which impact on their teaching method and learning activities in distinctive ways. This view is supported by Ramsden (1992) who suggested that the teaching methods varied according to the teachers, subject discipline and organizational constraints but they all actively involved students in acquiring knowledge, interpreting results and reality in a cooperative learning context.

5.5 Implications for Teaching and Learning in the Next Cycle

The group had mutually decided that they would reorganise the way they taught and move towards a student centred model.

As they began to implement this, a number of significant questions arose: If diversity of student knowledge and needs are acknowledged, then how does one teach classes where each person has a different set of strengths and weaknesses and prior learning?

Where is the balance between what ‘is good for them to learn’ and what they want to learn? How does one support student-centred learning?

The group determined to change their approach. Given the number of initial problems; they decided to introduce specific student-centred activities gradually, rather than radically restructure complete units. If one is to follow a student-centred approach to learning then careful thought must be given to the use of teaching strategies.

From the concerns mentioned above, the lecturers realized how students approach their learning. Because students have widely varying intellectual abilities, work ethics, and levels of sensitivity to criticism a substantial part of lecturers’ learning experience was learning how to confront and work through the conflicts and different student responses that inevitably arise from these variations. This view is supported by Ramsden(1992) who has argued that the best approach to improving teaching is by studying students’ learning.

The relationship between students’ approach to learning and the quality of those learning outcomes has been a focus of study for several researchers (Biggs, 1987; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Saljo, 1976) There is general agreement that there are two fundamental approaches to learning: deep and surface. Students who assume a deep approach to their learning are intrinsically motivated and search for meaning by integrating new information with existing knowledge. Surface learners are extrinsically motivated (largely by grades) and have a reproductive conception of learning.

5.6 Operational Constraints

The facilitator and critique person (consultant) attempted to discuss how introducing students to a student-centred learning environment may encourage students to take a deep approach to learning. After all, Gibbs (1992) and Ramsden (1992) recommend that university teachers should encourage students to adopt a deep approach to their learning.

Unless students adopt a deep approach to learning, students will not practice learning strategies that develop understanding, but will continue to use less effective strategies. Biggs (1987) and Gibbs (1992) suggest that university teachers should address four aspects in order to encourage students to adopt a deep approach: intrinsic motivation, active involvement in learning, interaction with others, and development of a well-structured knowledge base.

To find out what team members learnt from the project so far, I asked each member to express individually their reflections concerning the project's achievements and limitation.

The research team indicated that there were some barriers affecting the implementation, such as the high work load of the research team and the difficulty for the team to negotiate an action plan, as they had only limited time to meet together. The team suggested that they could exchange experiences with each other outside the action learning meeting.

I found that the identification of the concern was a difficulty at the beginning. There were too many issues that lecturers wanted to address to improve teaching. The facilitator and faculty developer helped the group into a specific area. There are many different methods and ways of using teaching techniques but the method used will usually relate to the type of class and the objective of the class.

5.7 Action Plans for the Next Cycle were:

a) The project planned to provide a workshop or in-service course on teaching improvements which could encourage lecturers to take a greater interest in it and provide fresh and innovative ideas whilst at the same time covering lecturers' teaching situation.

b) Lecturers would continually operate student-centred approaches with various activities. They would compare learning outcomes between old and new approaches. The learning outcomes could be seen from students' responses and lecturers' learning experience in using the approaches.

c) The group agreed to develop teaching improvement in two ways; the first way is the development of the traditional style and the second way is the promotion of the student-centred style.

d) The group agreed to monitor the changes occurring within the projects. The changes were recorded for further discussion in the next meeting. Reflection by each member was also requested to ensure the learning outcomes. Participation of the action learning team with regards to improving teaching should be developed well before stepping on to the next stage.

Between cycle 1 and cycle 2

The action learning team negotiated about topics in regard to teaching activities. The team met the consultant and faculty developer to talk about how we could provide a better student-centred approach. Lecturers needed a better resource, facilities and support for the students. There was also a suggestion for a mandatory time each week with facilitator, consultant, faculty developer, and more opportunity to work as a team with other members so that these became a part of the action requirement so that they could share and benefit from each other's expertise.

P.119 included in CHAPTER 5

Chapter 6 started at p.120

Chapter 6

The Action Learning Phase – Cycle 2

Cycle 2 commenced with meeting No.4 August, 2003 and continued to resolve the issues that had arisen in cycle 1. The meeting discussed teaching improvement approaches that would be appropriate, further action, and the action plan for the rest of the project.

6.1 The Planning Stage

Faculty factors which must be reconsidered included**:**

- learning objectives;
- size of the class;
- current ability of students to function autonomously; and
- current ability of the instructor to utilize these educational strategies.

In this period the research team made significant efforts to improve teaching in two ways: the first way was the development of the traditional style of teaching to develop the quality of student learning and the second way was the promotion of student-centred style. However, during this time implementation of the student-centred approaches was to continue. Teaching methods could be varied from class to class. It is important not to settle on a single teaching method because students learn differently and respond to teaching methods differently. However, for this to happen, the lecturers must create a learning environment which increases students' involvement in and responsibility for the learning process**.**

The shift continued from teacher-centred and teacher-directed learning to one that was much more student-centred. The action learning team realized that the new approach

involved a total restructure of the course; the content, assessment and mode of instruction. However, the research team concluded that assessment procedure could not be completely changed within a short period of time because we still used the conventional assessment process, which was based on examination results. Nevertheless, during the academic semester, we attempted to give a mark for students' participation and involvement in the learning process to contribute to their final grade.

The action learning team also understood that the role of the student and faculty member changes and both must be ready to accept those changes.

Students must take responsibility for their own professional development and increase their level of participation in the process. They must change from simply dealing with the use of isolated facts or subjects to becoming aware of the relevancy of the information and its application. Students may resent and resist these changes. Lecturers needed to help students make this transition.

Lecturers must be ready to develop new roles in teaching and attitudes as they make the shift to a student-centred environment.

The instructor may elect to retain the lecture as the primary communication technique within his or her course. In this situation, he or she must recognize the limitations of the lecture and understand that exclusive use of the lecture constrains learning. The challenge is to make changes in the delivery of the lecture in order to improve its effectiveness as a learning environment for students.

> *The lecturer's task is to teach students how to use concepts and principles and how to think, not to present abstracts of textbooks or other readily available sources of information. The lecture should complement and supplement the text, not replace it. The lecture should be used to provide up-to-date information that is not readily available along with theories or opinions. Thus, lectures should be updated and revised yearly (Group meeting, August 2003) .*

The development of the traditional styled teaching concentrates on understanding and increasing the efficiency and the quality by emphasizing the role of the lecturers. The lecturers should take part in thinking, developing and proposing how to improve the quality and the efficiency for the benefit of the students (Group meeting, August 2003).

To promote the student-centred style, the activities in teaching development have to put emphasis on the understanding that they want teach the learners to study by themselves and arrange activities for which the learners have set the goals and selected the topics of the learning process by themselves. This kind of teaching teaches the learners to think while creating their own judgment. To solve problems effectively depends upon the real application (Group Meeting , August 2003).

Workplace learning

A few visits were made by lecturers to observe others' classroom practice and formal reports were made to the action learning team. Literature and informal staff room discussion provided advocacy and collaboration for classroom change.

This study illustrates the importance of the action learning team climate in supporting the introduction of new roles for lecturers. It is interesting to note that the move towards close collaboration by the action learning team provided a platform for the introduction of new workplace practices. (Researcher's field notes, August 2003)

Action learning team members reported.

Prior experience needs consideration as there may be an emphasis on exposing our teaching strategies for students to reflect on whole learning experience (Group Meeting No.4, August 2003).

6.2 The Action Stage

6.2.1 Development of the traditional style of teaching that moves towards a student-centred approach

The traditional style of teaching basically emphasizes the lecturer and the content of the subject. The lecturers compile the content for the learning, then the learners acknowledge and remember it, discuss the content given by the lecturer or practice according to the lecturer's advice and do the report as the lecturers have advised and directed. The teaching consists of the lecture, the discussion the practice and the individual study:

> *The development of the traditional style of teaching can be operated in many ways starting from developing the lecturers to have good teaching preparation to setting the teaching goals for each teaching strategy in order to get good results, having the clearest presentation of the content, using appropriate technology and evaluating the teaching and the learning well while maintaining the academic principles (L1, L5, Written journals, August 2003).*

From these principles, the activities for the teaching development consisted of improving preparation of the lecture and becoming more effective in establishing the characteristics of a good lecture:

> *Teaching by discussion may also be conducted in this manner: it may include the purpose of the discussion, the use of various discussion techniques, the encouragement of the students to participate in the discussion, the role of the instructors in the discussion, the setting of the goals, various forms of practice, the development of each form of practice, the role the students, the instrument, the equipment and the evaluation.*

The individual study also covers the understanding of the goals, the direction of the operation, the roles of the instructors and the students and the evaluation (L2, L3, Written journals, August 2003).

A strategy to handle both of these is to lecture for 10 minutes and then take a 5 minute "break". During the break, students discuss their notes with the person next to them filling in gaps and correcting misunderstandings. Alternatively, an activity that leads to a discussion would be to pose a question and then employ the "think-pair-share" technique. In this technique, a question is posed to the students who then individually write an answer within a one to two minute time limit. Each student then "pairs" up with the person next to him/her and they discuss their answers, possibly developing a new one. The instructor can then start a discussion or the next lecture topic by asking a few pairs to "share" their answer with the class (L6, Written journals, August 2003).

6.2.2 Promotion of the student-centred environment

This teaching mainly emphasizes the learners and the learning process. The learners are the persons who specify what they want to study, how to study and for what purpose. The lecturers basically give advice and consultation and evaluate them. This style includes self-study-based, inquiry-based, problem-solving based and research-based teaching.

These teaching strategies put emphasis on the role of the learners, so the role of the lecturers must change too. For the development of teaching in this style the role of lecturers had to stress the understanding of the teaching in those trends, the learning of the new process, and the skill that the lecturers need to use in this new role.

I integrated the activities with the subject matter of the course. Some activities were taught in the lecture sessions, while other

were taught in tutorials. Their belief is supported by recent reports on accounting education which argue for a shift in emphasis from one that is knowledge-based to one that focuses on the learning process. Previously, in the tutorial sessions students worked on accounting problems and explored solutions to them. This was changed by placing solutions to the problems… I considered to incorporate a tutorial section so students attended classes for 3 hours each week, comprising a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial (L1, Written journals, August 2003).

Students in law school need to be given opportunities to work together more often. This goal can be accomplished in a variety of ways. I pose a question or present a hypothetical during class, then ask students to talk with one another to reach an answer. Also, you can ask student experts to work together to prepare a role play, presentation or simulation. Students even can be asked to collaborate on writing projects (L5, Written journals, August 2003).

In a computer science class, I posed questions like:
What will happen if I arrange this input?
What could happen if I don't include this conditional check?
Why is it important to reduce the number of operations in sorting algorithms?
Why are all four conditions necessary for deadlock to occur?
If I have a computer in the classroom, and the questions relate to the structure of an algorithm or its behaviour the answers can be tested in real time. Even better, if the students have computers at hand, they can try solutions on their own. In the latter case, the lecturer must be careful that the students think about their answers first, or the activity will degrade into a hacking session (L4, Written journals, August 2003).

6.2.3 Establishing a conducive environment

Motivational aspects of student learning can be addressed by establishing a positive emotional climate in the learning situation. This is not easy to achieve, and requires commitment on the part of both lecturers and students. Establishing a positive emotional climate requires lecturers to communicate their aims and expectations to students. Lecturers also need to listen to students and address their legitimate needs and concerns. Effective two-way communication ensures that lecturers and students are clear on what each is trying to achieve (Gibbs, 1992).:

> *Lecturers can begin the exercise by randomly throwing the ball out, trying to avoid selecting the same students every time. After that person catches the ball and shares news, he/she then throws it to someone else. The news can be anything that puts the class in a good mood and ready to write. Even if some students are having a bad day and have no good news of their own, their spirits often are lifted because of someone else's news (L3, Written journals, August 2003).*

> *During the class I ask questions or give students problem-solving activities that encourage them use the information they gain from the lecture. I will encourage students to think actively during a lecture by announcing at the beginning of the class period that I will interrupt my lecture midway so that students may write a one-minute paper on a topic derived from the lecture. At the end of the lecture, I will use the "minute paper" by asking students to respond (L6, L2, L5, Written journals, August 2003).*

6.3 The Reporting Stage

During the meeting lecturers aimed at continuing the discussion of issues arising from action plan, and the action learning team described the changes they had brought into their practice together with difficulties they found. Although some obstacles impacted negatively on the attainment of project goals, members also reported meaningful results from their classroom to the action learning meeting.

During this period, communication about the project's progress continued within the team. I began meeting No.5 in September, 2003 by expressing my gratitude to my colleagues for their consistent commitment to the work through the project. I then suggested that it would be beneficial if the research team share their experience of practicsing the student-centred approach and discussing the outcomes of the previous activities. The members of the research team presented the students' response to the new learning process, with an example of the resulting discussion. The lecturers decided to introduce specific student-centred activities gradually, rather than radically restructure complete units and made efforts to improve teaching as outlined above.

Issues recorded by the action learning team:

- Stronger social skills are another benefit of the activities. Students could interact with their group members - being diplomatic and offering constructive criticism and suggestions for their classmates' work:

> *A student is the master of style, he must make sure that all of his group members have written their assignments according to the rules of press style. To accomplish this, students may meet outside of class and adjust their papers until all have been edited by group members.* ***I've discovered that this new teaching method helps to achieve course objectives. It encourages additional active learning.***

> *Students spend three weeks working to improve their writing, while mastering their one assigned specific basic writing skill (L3, Group meeting No.5, September 2003).*

- Increased participation.

While editing the work of their group members, students are often amazed by the variety of writings created from the same situation or set.

> *The activities increase student participation, individual responsibility and group responsibility. Students who help group mates and their pair by showing how something could be done differently feel good about their efforts. Often - even though some masters have very specific tasks - they go beyond what is required and help in other ways (L2, L4, Group meeting No.5, September 2003).*

- Different teaching styles can benefit students.

> *It can address students' different learning styles. For example, for students who are concrete thinkers, a problem-oriented approach may be the way to understand complex material. When these students apply abstract concepts to specific situations, they can see how these concepts actually work (L1, Group meeting No.5, September 2003).*

- Need to plan time allocation.

Lecturers need to consider time allocation to different tasks. The time spent on strategies instruction reduced the time that was available to work on the subject matter. Many comments and critiques had been gathered from lecturers and students particularly about more time allocation which was required for covering the topic when using the new learning approaches.

These goals can only be achieved if students have enough time to develop a group dynamic, encountering and overcoming difficulties in working together. Cooperative groups should remain together for at least a month for the dynamic to have a chance of developing (L2, Written journals, September 2003).

The main difficulty that I experienced related to time. There were many occasions, especially during the lecture presentations, when I felt that I needed to focus more on the subject matter. This made it difficult to maintain a focus on the learning strategies (L3, Written journals, September 2003).

If I spend time in class on active learning exercises, some contents had to be taken out to put active learning in (L6, Written journals, September 2003).

The main difficulty that the lecturer experienced in the programme related to time: identifying how much time was needed to teach the various strategies, and allocating enough time to teach them properly (L4, L5, Written journals, September 2003).

L1 report that the program was difficult to implement, partly because he had tried to achieve so much in one semester. He found himself trying to use the one hour tutorial to cover both a learning strategy and a technical accounting issue, each of which might required one hour to present. Consequently, some tutorials became rushed and more teacher-centred than was planned. However, he believed that they tried to do too much in the context of one course, and that they should not have tried to teach all the strategies they selected (L1, Written journals, September 2003).

- Lecturers needed to gain mastery of new styles.

The development of new learning styles is different from that of traditional styles where lecturers are accustomed to the methods. But in the promotion of student-centred styles, most of the lecturers were not familiar with them, so the development had to begin basically with the understanding of the needs, the purposes, the roles and the operation.

- Need to match students' stage of learning

Lecturers expressed an understanding that these are learned skills and the teacher's role is to match the student's stage of learning while moving the student towards self-directed learning:

> *We just could not reach them because many of them had not taken responsibility for their own learning at all. If a lecturer attempts to use a difficult approach with a dependent learner, the result is likely to be entirely counterproductive (Group meeting No.5, September 2003).*

These results had convinced lecturers of several things which affected their approach to student learning and the results suggested additional lesson to others**.**

6.4 The Reflection Stage

To know what action learning team members learned from the project, I asked each member to express individually their reflections concerning the projects' achievement and barrier encountered. I also asked them to identify sources of learning.

- The action learning team members suggested changing some their teaching strategies and did not use all the strategies that they had intended. Instead, they focused on reviewing the strategies that they had already taught. They indicated that the

approach seemed to be time consuming based on the current experiences. They had some difficulties with the time that was available to teach the learning strategies. It took longer to teach than they had expected, which made it difficult for them to cover all the course content.

However, they recognized that even though the strategies would support the learning, nonetheless, teaching them would compete for time within the course. As a result the lecturers decided to limit the strategies they taught (Group meeting, August 2003).

It is important to note that the above approach, which represents significant changes to the lecture format, is time consuming**.** For this reason, it is incumbent upon the lecturer to ensure that he or she has critically evaluated and prepared the information to be presented**.** If they wish to increase student participation in the lecture, then other educational techniques must be employed. These techniques must be well planned and executed in order to maximize their benefits to students given the time required to implement them (Group meeting, September 2003).

- The team commented that the action learning team should work harder than before by increasing collaboration with insiders and outsiders to exchange ideas of aspects of active involvement in the learning task and a well-structured knowledge base that were essential in designing teaching learning strategies**.**

> *Some action learning team members most recent learning has involved participation in a formal course outside university. They described that it provided them with the big picture. They felt that the course has had a significant effect on their teaching practice. Mostly it has helped them to understand how they could bring together and interrelate their experiences with theoretical framework. As direct result of the course they had recently taken on some new initiatives.*

- Lecturers relied on student evaluation to alert them if the learning program which they devised is working for them. Some of the action learning team reported:

> *One of the most important outcomes …was that we became more aware of the extent to which students do not know or use techniques that stimulated us to reconsider our own conception of teaching and our priorities as a teacher (Group meeting, September 2003).*

> *We try to make them aware of ourselves as learners and understand how we should learn (Group meeting , September 2003).*

Therefore the group meeting identified with Grow's (1991) categorisation of learners into four stages in the development of self-directed learning supports and which explains many of the academics' struggles in this regard. He defines particular teaching styles which match each stage and prepare the learner to advance to a higher stage. Stage one is defined as dependent where the learner expects the teacher to be the authority and coach. Stage two is the interested learner who benefits most from the motivator and guide. The higher level stages three and four, involved and self-directed learners respectively, require first a facilitator and then a consultant to support their learning. An important point made by both Grow (1991) and Brookfield (1992) is that the notion that adults should be able to operate as self-directed learners, simply by being given the opportunity and then being expected to do so, is entirely misplaced. In fact, if a teacher attempts to use a stage four approach with a stage one dependent learner, the result is likely to be entirely counterproductive.

Workplace learning

To identify what action learning team members learnt from the project and what the group contributed to individual team members I asked each member to express individually their sources of learning. I found that the way members learned might be different, but it was virtually consistent with the Kolb learning cycle (1984); the most

widely used, appreciated and criticized descriptive model of learning as a continuous process is the experiential learning model (experience – reflection – cognition – action).

Some team members did some professional reading and shared that with other action learning team members. Sharing is seen to be at the heart of collaboration. Respondents were strongly in favour of lecturers sharing ideas and strategies for teaching and they often felt that this form of workplace learning was important to them. They expressed it in these terms:

> *I think they learn more by doing and by sharing,*
> *I think most of its comes from working with colleagues*
> *I think lecturers need to have time to sit down and work out things*
> *that they do well and things that they don't do so well and things*
> *that they think they really need to work on.. with a group of lecturers*
> *(Researcher's field notes, September 2003).*

Lecturers saw the meeting as providing learning opportunities.

> *Well we're starting to look at using our meeting as professional*
> *development opportunities and so far that's been really quite good*
> *(Group meeting, September 2003).*

All team members considered that reflection was very important for evaluating the way we learn in their action learning team. However, some individual views recognised:

- The sense of belonging and commitment to the project was not equally shared across the research team;

- That the emotional level of each staff member fluctuated during the progress of the project and due to the fluctuating understanding amongst group members (Written journals, September 2003).

This was continued with the critique group's feedback on the progression of the project. The critique group advised that the main issues in the implementation of the project were:

- Maintaining active participation from insiders and outsiders. This could be caused by the fact that if those people had a low level of understanding of the problems or issues of improvement. Also, communication amongst participants in the project was important;

- The meaning of improving practice in each action of the project should be made clear. For example: the staff should know about her or his weaknesses in her or his professional practice, for which she/he intends to improve**.**

6.5 Action Plans for the Next Cycle

Following meeting No.5 which ended with the personal reflection of each team member, the next cycle continued to resolve the issues that arose from the reflections. The team pointed out the strengths approach that main issues in the implementation of the project were:

- To modify the practice by stressing the need to cover the subject content source.

- To cover the content, students need to take responsibility for learning the factual material so that they can apply it in the classroom activities. Lecturers provide active learning techniques which can be used to supplement rather than replace lecture. Lecturers were not advocating complete abandonment of lecturing, they still lecture about half of the class period.

- To operate and source student-centred approaches to activities according to each objective and choose short well structured activities for content to be covered in each period of study**.** Occasionally lecturers assign a hands-on task that students must

perform individually or in-small groups outsides from class, either with lecturers' supervision or on their own.

- To monitor the changes occurring within the projects. The changes were recorded for further discussion in the next meeting. Reflection of each member was also requested to ensure the learning outcomes.

6.6 Workplace Learning Contributions to Improve Teaching: Between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3

- Working alongside more experienced colleagues

Lecturers had found working with experienced colleagues a rich source of learning. This seemed to have happened without particularly close observation of colleagues or any conscious effort to copy them. Some felt that the process had been particularly effective in developing more tacit forms of knowledge. The lecturers needed to be more aware of people's strength so that they could share and benefit from each other's expertise. In the university the administrators and senior lecturer were an role model they should interested in trying out new ideas in the workplace. The administrator was also very supportive of new initiatives (Group interview, September 2003).

- Networking

Networking with fellow professionals, particularly from other organisations or specialisms was seen as a significant source of development (Researchers' observation, September 2003). Benefits described by lecturers were: "it allows you to compare notes on how things are done"; "it offers you help with solving particular problems"; and "it gives reassurance that what I'm doing is on the right lines". Some lecturers reported involvement in formal networking arrangements where there was a regular and planned sharing of experiences.

Networking is another practice which helps lecturers rationalize their efforts. Sharing activities and ideas among departments and year level groups enriches each lecturer's practice.

Chapter 7

The Action Learning Phase – Cycle 3

Meeting No.6 at the end of September, 2003 continued to resolve the issues that arose from the group reflection. The meeting discussed teaching improvement approaches that would be appropriate.

7.1 The Planning Stage

- Varying the objectives of each class.

Lecturers should not feel the need to cover more than a few objectives during a single class, and they should vary the objectives for each period. Those objectives include: rules and principles, policies and perspectives that lecturers want students to integrate, skills that lecturers want students to think about and critical reading of material. Once lecturers have determined what teaching objectives they want to accomplish, they need to think about the effective teaching methods for accomplishing these objectives.

- Minimizing risk.

Adopting active learning techniques can be risky for lecturer, but the risk can be minimized by choosing short well structured activities.

> *It is important not to settle on a single teaching method because my students learn differently and will respond better to some teaching methods over others (Group meeting No.6, September 2003).*

- Balancing lecturers' and students' activity.

Based on team experiences, lecturer appreciated the need to have a balance between lecturer presentations, and student activities. It seems that some lecture is necessary to discuss those things that the lecturers view as critical or difficult to understand. It is also important, however, that there be some activity to get the students active in the classroom.

> *Simply ask questions occasionally and give the students a short time to come up with solutions and answers, working either individually or in small groups. Then collect answers from several randomly selected individuals or groups. One or two such exercises that take a total of 5-10 minutes can keep a class relatively attentive for an entire period. The many hours of class time be saved by doing this should be more than sufficient for all the active learning exercises you might want to use. The classes will be more lively and effective, you will still cover the syllabus, and you might even be able to augment it to include topics you never had time to cover before. Moreover, if you announce that some of the gaps and exercises in the handouts will be the subject of test questions and then keep your promise, the students will even read the handouts at least after the first test (Group meeting, September 2003).*

7.2 The Action Stage

- Increased focus on successful strategies.

Lecturers wanted to increase the attention paid to learning strategies; lecturers tried to reduce the amount of subject matter contained in the course in order to do so. This would enable them to teach the learning strategies which they had to drop because there was no time, and give students additional practice with the learning strategies which were successful.

L5 decided to use the Socratic method, a method in common use.

> *When strictly followed, in the Socratic method the students do most of the talking. I also guide the discussion by asking questions. These questions might be about the cases that were in assigned reading… Socratic Dialogue: the series of questions that I create should be designed to develop analytical skills (L5, Group meeting, September 2003).*

- Engaging students inside and outside of the classroom.

L4 and L1 reported that they intended to develop communication with students via e-mail and website.

> *Lecturers can respond to student questions or invite them to respond to one another The lecturers have a website for their courses and find useful links to other websites that will enhance the material taught in the course (L4, L1, Group meeting, September 2003).*

- Student Presentations:

L4 and L5 proposed increasing student presentation.

> *..these often work well in a seminar class or in senior students' classes, where students can present their own work or make presentations within the context of a role play or simulation. They allow students to take responsibilities for their own learning*

and the learning of their classmates. To ensure quality, lecturer may want to meet with student presenters before class (L4, L5, Group meeting, September 2003).

- Assigning a mini paper.

L2 proposed the use of a mini paper to link with other strategies.

assign a mini paper (no longer than 5 pages) on a specific problem covered in class. You can assign the mini paper to all students, or assign certain students to write mini papers on different subjects covered during the course. Also you can assign a mini paper as a follow up to role play or student presentation (L2, Group meeting, September 2003).

- Modelling critical feedback.

L3 intended to collect students' products and provide constructive comments according to the objectives of each week. In addition, he will reproduce several products (perhaps slipping in one of his own as well) and hand them out without attribution, go over some of them in class to illustrate the sort of thing you're looking for, and suggest ways to make good products even better. Modelling of this type helps students understand the process they need to go through to improve their own work. After several similar assignments and feedback sessions, students started giving the kind of results that lecturers are looking for and lecturers also began giving one another meaningful feedback in the group.

I repeated the message about setting up problems individually and completing them in groups. The students who had complained soon afterward reported improved interactions within their groups (L3, Group meeting, September 2003).

- Restructure of lecture time to be used for presenting only difficult concepts and the remaining time can be used for participatory time.

> *Active or participatory methods help to engender thought skills however they tend to reduce the context that can be covered in a fixed time period and they require small groups for effectiveness. An alternative method for large groups which allows the use of participatory methods and reduces the amount of lecturing is a method whereby students preread the material required for the course. This allows lecture times to be used for presenting difficult concepts and the remaining time can be used for participatory methods (L 6, Group meeting, September 2003).*

- Another approach was to use handouts.

> *..put substantial portions of the course notes lengthy prose, detailed derivations, complex diagrams in handouts, leaving gaps to be filled in and sprinkling questions and instructions like "Prove", "Justify", "Verify", "Explain" throughout the presentation. Spend class time only on the most critically important and conceptually difficult parts of the notes leaving the students to cover the rest for themselves (Written journals, September 2003).*

7.3 The Reporting Stage

Meeting No.7 on October, 2003 continued to discuss the issues of the way the team carried out action and the issues that arose on reflection.

The work overload limited the time to meet together. The members of the research team had many other tasks besides their involvement in this project. Reports confirmed benefits from the student-centred strategies and positive responses from students.

In general, the learning strategies seemed to be successful, particularly with respect to using study group and explaining ideas. The team found the study group was an appropriate strategy to teach at this time; it gave students an opportunity to get to know each other better and to do some initial planning to support each other in their learning. Explaining ideas and concepts was linked to study groups:

> *I felt different when the students were working in groups. Before I often felt hesitant to join a group because I'd feel I would have to push them along, but this semester the group is so focused and task - oriented that this hasn't been a problem at all (L6, Group meeting, October 2003).*

> *Students practiced using the strategy by explaining accounting concepts to their peers (L1, Group meeting, October 2003).*

- Student reactions.

Lecturers reported that students could see the benefits of lecturers' teaching. Some students who were repeating the course after having failed it in a previous semester expressed appreciation about the new way the course was conducted:

> *I felt that one of the successes from this programme was the enjoyment we gained from trying out new teaching strategies and different approaches to teaching. In particular we felt positive about the quality of group work (L4, L5, Written journals, October 2003).*

> *The students made fewer errors as they progressed in the program, the lecturer was left with more time to concentrate on other areas of students' writings, including helping them to position their employer/client in a positive light, write with their public in mind, identify and begin with the most important information, or whatever else is needed (L2, Group meeting, October 2003).*

Class time was used to revise the theory and then to apply the theory using case studies, projects for ' real situation'. Then application of the theory to ensure understanding and realistic application and implementation (L2, L5, Written journals, October 2003).

At the end of semester, feedback from students indicated that they were quite positive about the introduction of learning strategies into the course. When they were asked to indicate the three most important things they had learned in the course, many students mentioned not only subject matter knowledge and understanding but learning strategies as well (Group meeting, November 2003).

For example, one student reported that the most important things she learned were,

Better study techniques, the study skills were good and gave me a better idea of what I should be doing (L4, Written journals, October 2003).

Lecturers considered it was a more enjoyable class, Since

Besides their pedagogical benefits, in class cooperative exercise makes classes much more enjoyable for both students and instructors (L2, L4, Written journals, October 2003).

- Class atmosphere changed.

....When group exercises are interspersed throughout a lecture, the picture changes. Once a class accustomed to group work gets going on a problem, the classroom atmosphere changes: the leaden silence changes to a hum, then a chatter, punctuated by arguments and laughter. Most students - even those not doing much talking - are engaged in thinking about the question at hand instead of just mechanically transcribing notes from the chalkboard. Even if some students are

still reluctant to participate, as they might be, an active involvement of 90-95% is clearly acceptable (L5, L6, Written journals, October 2003).

7.4 The Reflection Stage

When trying new things, one of the joys of teaching is the endless variety of the classroom experience. We are free to experiment with different material and ways of presenting that material. As we master our subject areas, we can turn our attention to finding the best ways to engage students in those subjects. The benefits of variety accrue both to students and lecturer:

We believe that we succeeded in making classes more interactive and student-centred. While the learning strategies were being taught, both lecturer and students were actively involved in a process of cooperative learning, and shared the responsibility for teaching and learning. Classes seemed to be more interactive than before (Group meeting, October 2003).

We can introduce them to a student-centred learning environment that encouraged students to take a deeper approach to learning (Group meeting, October 2003).

When these alternative forms of teaching are used selectively, however, they can engage all of the students actively in the learning process. This kind of involvement can promote more effective learning because each student is participating in the process.

The role change is significant and demanding in the sense that more responsive leadership qualities are required as success is measured in terms of the teacher's ability.

> *I feel I am more responsible for my own learning. Doing the action learning project helps me learn more than I would on an individual project (Group meeting, October 2003).*

At the last meeting in October 2003, all action learning team members and facilitators, and critique group member were involved. We divided the discussion into the following agenda:

7.4.1 Educational implications of the outcomes of the project

The commitment to student-centred approaches continues, but the engagement with activities described above has already enriched the group's professional understanding and development. However, there was flexibility in the way the team took action.

The linking of learning strategies with content seemed to be beneficial. Without such a link it would have been difficult to include the learning strategies, because students would have seen them as irrelevant and time would not have permitted.

Lecturers found the attention they gave to teaching strategies was a positive experience for themselves as well as for the students. The programme made them more conscious of the strategies and techniques involved in the discipline analysis procedures that formed the course content. This awareness helped them provide more explicit and more adequate coverage of the techniques used to study the teaching improvement.

To improve teaching and learning in university education, the action learning team proposed that lecturers should encourage students to develop from surface learning to a deep learning approach to their studies. Providing a student-centred learning environment for students enabled them to work within the discipline. This may be enhanced by the use of group activities with students sharing their ideas and helping one another. In this way students can also develop generic skills so that when they graduate they are well to join their professional careers in an effective way.

7.4.2 Personal and professional development

As a result of lecturers' recent experience with personal and professional development, they have some firm views on the nature of professional development in terms of its form and accessibility.

Some in service courses encouraged lecturers to take a greater interest in their teaching. Lecturers then sought out some books which provided fresh and innovative ideas whilst at the same time covering the basics. They felt that there is a need for time and professional input through courses with a practical emphasis and it is then up to the lecturers to apply it in the classroom.

When asked to reflect upon what the team thought had been the most effective ways for them to learn the cooperative approach, many lecturers identified the positive learning benefits they had derived from working in teams and from other forms of collaboration.

> *They think initially about the input and the idea, to listen to professional input and then to actually try it out with someone who was proficient in it a classroom situation, to team teach with them and to plan what we were going to do (Written journals, October 2003).*

Team work seems to have been especially effective when new or challenging work had been undertaken collectively. The reasons for this, lecturers suggested, were: "a difficult task often appears less daunting when being tackled by a team"; "different members bring different skills to the group" (Group meeting, November 2003). It was also suggested that collaborative efforts usually achieve better end results than individual efforts and these can have beneficial effects on the morale and confidence of learners. Lecturers also felt that more opportunity to work as a team with other members of staff was important. They would like to use the help of an expert either from outside or within

the university who could also work alongside with them in the classroom (Group meeting, October 2003).

Much of workplace learning lecturers encountered has occurred in the classroom or through conversation with colleagues as well as through occasions such as staff meetings regarding content and teaching practices. However, these should be complemented by the in-university course. Lecturers noted that support was received through the team-teaching conducted with the leading lecturer and head of faculty (Field notes, October 2003).

One of the important unexpected outcomes of the project was the development of the teaching portfolios. Initially lecturers were not interested in the portfolio and some regarded it as a policing tool but, the attitude changed. Lecturers have recognized the importance of portfolios as developmental and growth tools that can be used for promotion and appraisal purposes.

It seems to me that lecturers did not reject propositional knowledge rather this knowledge is viewed as an important component of the mix that underpins informal workplace learning.

7.4.3 Perception of the action learning project

In closing the last meeting, lecturers were asked if they planned to make action learning a part of their practice**.** Despite the issue of time, Which was one of the most frequently mentioned in that there should be sufficient time to conduct their action learning, all six lecturers said that they felt that they would continue to include action research as part of their teaching practices. Team members stated, "You hope you are being effective, but you don't really know. This [action learning] is a way of assuring yourself, maybe not completely, but to a much greater extent. You are able to measure yourself. And if you can measure yourself, then you can stand up to someone else's scrutiny" (Field note, October 2003).

Lecturers were far more committed to following the step process of action learning and stated, “The reflection and planning, always. It just becomes a part of who I am now and I like it. It works for me” (Written journals, October 2003).

At the same time, action learning team members saw the value of engaging in all steps. One of the reasons cited by lecturers was that action learning gave them a way of measuring themselves and their work (Group meeting, October 2003):

> *The action learning program benefited me a lot. I had to judge myself, what I am doing in class is now influenced by the principles of action learning meetings (L2, Group meeting, October 2003).*

All participants indicated that activities linked to action learning provided them with a mirror to reflect on their practice.

> *I changed from an individualistic working style to working with the bigger action set. This provided an opportunity to engage and share ideas with many colleagues. It improved the quality of my classroom practice (L3, Group meeting, October 2003).*

This project has allowed lecturers an opportunity to reflect on their teaching improvement under their workplace conditions.

Lecturer 6 felt that the action learning program was a valuable exercise. There were incidences that yielded good results on teaching and learning in the classroom. The lecturers improved their teaching styles, which in turn improved students’ learning styles and thus performance. Post program discussions with colleagues made us consider continuing with the action learning in our future staff development programs, especially teaching development (Group meeting, October 2003).

Lecturers were enthusiastic to talk about the changes they have brought into practice. Examples of students' attestations were displayed, indicating the lecturer's joy at being able to bring some positive change into other people's lives (Field notes, September 2003).

Growing evidence from this study suggested that this kind of professional development not only makes lecturers feel better about their practice, but it also reaps learning gains for students, especially in the kinds of more challenging learning that new learning approaches bring. Creating a profession of teaching in which lecturers have the opportunity for continual learning is the likeliest way to inspire greater achievement for students.

Action learning is now accepted as an effective form of professional development. The case for action learning in the tertiary sector is well published (Kember 2000; Tjabane 2003). Action learning reduces the disparity between espoused theory and theory in use (Argyris and Schon 1978). It is an effective way to bring about organisational learning and long-term change. Action learning builds communities of practice amongst people committed to enlightening themselves about the relationship between their own circumstances, actions and the consequence of their own situation.

7.4.4 Action learning makes use of facilitation

Most action learning group meeting were assisted by a facilitator whose main role is to help the team and its members to work through the project, and to foster participant learning. The facilitator was 'internal' in the organisation and project and usually has the role of managing the process rather than providing 'content'.

As I was one of the facilitator team, I learned that lecturers want to be involved in staff development activities. They tend to take responsibility for their own development. These experiences provided a very conducive learning environment for both myself, the university stakeholders and the lecturers' needs.

Team members made personal responses about the facilitators.

> *The facilitators' role is ensure that each and every team member is able to have their say in a safe and supportive environment (L3, Group meeting, October 2003).*

> *I think the important thing was that our facilitator was able to keep us focused on the job and the timeline that we had set (L2 , Group meeting, October 2003).*

> *I doubt the project would have ever have gotten off the ground had it not been for our facilitator arranging our meeting times, agenda and venues (L5, Group meeting, October 2003).*

> *Well I think that the facilitators helped to define the process by which team members could work through decisions that needed to be made (L6, Group meeting, October 2003).*

> *I think the facilitators helped work through some very difficult people issues (L4, Group meeting, October 2003).*

> *Facilitators have to able to help us to find ways of pulling together the masses of information which the team generated (L1, Group meeting, October 2003).*

Cycle 3 was the last cycle of this action learning program due to academic semester finishing at that time and the project would be evaluated in each semester for further development.

Chapter 8

Evaluation of Action Learning Outcomes

Chapters 5 to 7 have presented the way the action learning team and facilitators carried out the study. This chapter continues to discuss evaluation of the learning outcomes from the action learning project.

After the last meeting of the action learning project, I had the opportunity to undertake an evaluation of learning outcomes. This study was conducted to evaluate the results upon completion of the action learning process and it was intended to determine in the final analysis how much was gained from the action learning team effort. The evaluation was adapted from Kirkpatrick (1994) cited in Rothwell (1999) and focused on four key issues : evaluating reaction, evaluating learning, evaluating on-the-job behaviour change, and evaluating organizational results**.**

The purpose of this chapter is to report the analysis and interpretations of the data collected to provide a description of how the process of action learning informs faculty workplace learning and teaching practices. Each interview was summarized soon after the session and participants were asked to confirm or amend the summary.

The descriptive analysis of data was from transcribed semi-structured interviews (Appendix B), researcher field notes, observations and faculty documents. The data were grouped and organised into themes. A result of the thematic conceptualization was a broad categorical organization and the themes were related to objectives of the study.

I met the action learning team members both individually and as a group. Lecturers were also asked their perceptions of how they had evolved as a lecturer as related to engaging in action learning team.

It has been acknowledged that action learning focuses on the exploration of the personal practice of practitioners, while learning can be extended to other practitioners and groups through mutual relationships in their professional practice. In the light of this, after the action phase of the project ended, I interviewed the six research team members individually and questioned them about the things they learned from the team and from the activities conducted. The interview was aimed at understanding the effects of the project upon individual member of the research team. Briefly, each team member was asked to express their own experience of the project.

The interviews were conducted informally. Each member was asked to look back and reflect upon his/her experiences of past activities in the project. When the members met as a group, I used informal discussions to generate more ideas and expression. The interviews were carried out during the lunch breaks on campus.

I have summarised the lessons learnt by the action learning team members into categories as follows:

8.1 How Learning Occurred

All of the six lecturers interviewed responded that the learning process from the action learning project encouraged them to think about how their learning occurred.

Lecturer 2 said,

> *I believe my learning could be more valuable when we, as the learners, are being involved in the process and reflecting on that involvement. I think I need to improve the way I learn and communicate with others. My learning experience has arrived at the point that I should evaluate the way I operate with others (Interview, November 2003).*

Lecturer 5 said:

> *Learning is affected by two main factors, from within and outside the learner. From inside the learner, by this I mean psychological aspects such as motivation, interest, and ability or capacity to learn; from outside the learner, physical conditions or environmental atmosphere where the learning process takes place will inevitably influence the achievements of the learner. The more inside and outside factors are maintained at sufficient levels, the more chance the learner has to become a good learner (Interview, November 2003).*

Lecturer 1 said:

> *My learning was circled around my expectations of how could an academic staff group facilitate change. I realised that the benefits of the project were for me, for us, for the students, for the institution, for the community and for other people who felt the need for improvement in their practices (Interview, November 2003).*

The action learning project provided opportunities for lecturers to assume more control over their own learning. In the project, participants controlled:

- The selection of project topic and questions.
- Project goal setting.
- The pace of the learning.
- The format for the meetings.
- The strategies to be used.

> *The whole process is lecturer driven – we called the shots on all aspects of our project team's work (L3, interview, November 2003).*

> *The choice of what to learn and how to learn it was refreshing*

(L4, Interview, November 2003).

It's quite different to traditional professional development where I am told what to learn. In action learning I control my own learning (L6, Interview, November 2003).

In action learning, the team sets the agenda, not the administrators or Dean (L2, Interview, November 2003).

It took some time to become comfortable with taking control Ourselves - but once we did we moved rapidly (L5, Interview, November 2003).

Although, lecturers increased their self-awareness of learning. Sripatum University workplace learning remained controlled or at least constrained by time, set curriculum, and uncertain change process. These constraints prevented lecturers from implementing the strategies fully (Field Notes, November 2003).

8.2 A More Structured Approach to Teaching

All of the six lecturers interviewed responded with how the planned structure of the action learning process encouraged them to think about their teaching practices more regularly and more closely.

Lecturer 2 said,

It [action learning] is all about results and making changes to maximize the results at your next implementation. So I believe that it has helped me to be more logical and structured in my process (Interview, November 2003).

Lecturer 4 stated,

> *This semester is truly the first time I came across a defined structure for action learning, and this being my first experience with this I think it's challenged me to think about improving my teaching practice (Interview, November 2003).*

I observed that lecturers were able to follow the cycle of action learning carefully and consciously with the need for additional support (Field Notes, July, 2003). The data revealed that the lecturers were assessing their teaching practices in a more systematic manner. Lecturer 3 stated, "I think that it gives me more support for who I am as a teacher and it helps give a focus" (Interview, November 2003).

8.3 Changing knowledge about teaching

The data revealed that as the lecturers changed their teaching practices, their knowledge about teaching also changed. At the same time, the data revealed that as the teachers' knowledge changed, so did their teaching practices. As lecturer 3 aptly stated, "Yes, we are always continually changing things as a teacher, but it gives a focus for how you are doing it as opposed to where just in your mind you are continually changing".

The data revealed that teaching practices and knowledge seemed to work to promote or force change in each other. Lecturer 6 stated, "I'm more informed about the process, I've read the books, I am doing a lot more of taking information before I do something to see if it really makes a difference".

As a result of the action learning experience, lecturers also reported a number of changes in professional practice specific to their teaching activities. These perceptions cluster around two sub-themes: practical alterations and pedagogical shifts. The first includes those activities of teaching that may be considered overt in nature, that is, those which are changes or additions to practices of planning, organization, and delivery. The

second involves alterations in thought, that is, re-examination of perceptions that signify changes in attitude, outlook, or frame of mind and which then may affect subsequent behaviour.

8.4 Changing Practice

Change in practice focused on few areas:

- Increased interpersonal interaction
- Increase in multistrategic style
- Increased in teaching and professional confidence
- Increase skills of observation and awareness

The most frequently cited change in teaching activities subsequent to the action learning was the lecturers' perception of increasing levels of interpersonal interactions with others, primarily with students but also with colleagues.

Several described this as a shift in focus of the essential purpose of their teaching from one fixated exclusively on end-product and retention, to one nurturing concern with the process of learning and with the teacher-learner relationship that best facilitates learning. Lecturer 1 described this change as "becoming a facilitator" or "getting the teacher out of the attention" (Interview, November 2003).

Repeated references were made to lecturers' increased attempts to incorporate a wider diversity of instructional strategies as a result of action learning discussions. While lecturer 5 definitively stated that use of lecture delivery systems have become less frequent and have been replaced by discussions, presentations and peer evaluations, Lecturer 6 more simply expressed feelings affirmed through discussions about "what works, and what doesn't work". This affirmation to experiment with innovative strategies "outside of my normal comfort zone" was also reflected in references to feelings of increased professional confidence. Lecturer 4 described this as feeling "not so critical of

myself," while Lecturer 2 stated that participation in the action learning program "made me a better teacher because I now have much more knowledge about my teaching" (Interview, November 2003).

Lecturer 3 reported using journals and exit notes as a matter of course with students after observing an increase in teacher-student interaction accompanying this strategy. Lecturer 1 has implemented an on-line class discussion component in an attempt to increase interaction with students. Lecturer 2, lecturer 6, and lecturer 4 spoke of increased incidents of team-teaching and collegial peer assessments as indications that incidents of professional interaction have increased as a result of their professional development experiences.

8.5 Changing Pedagogy

The team reported a few areas of change in the pedagogy or theory of teaching:

- Expansion of the view of learning
- Expansion of student-teacher dichotomy
- Elaboration of teaching reflections
- Re-examination of the institutional structure

Many participants cited the greatest insights and changes in perspective resulted from incidents of educational dialogue surrounding the nature of students and the students' role in the learning process. Several expressed a newly formulated belief that instructors must become more student-centred (Field notes, November 2003).

Often this was accompanied by statements of belief that tertiary teachers must make greater attempts to model various ways of knowing, skills, and attitudes deemed desirable for learners to integrate. Lecturer 3, lecturer 5, and lecturer 1 spoke of "flexibility and adaptability" to describe this accommodation, lecturer 2 referred to this modeling as a "partnership" (Interview, November 2003).

In addition, frequent reference was made to a developing belief that tertiary teachers consider re-examination of authority and dominance issues by shifting the spotlight away from the instructor-as-performer to one highlighting student-as-teacher strategies. Lecturer 6 referred to this in a broad sense as "getting out of the directive mode," another as "learning to back off." (Interview, November 2003). The dichotomistic view of teacher-as-teller and student-as-thinker appears to be a philosophy challenged frequently and significantly by respondents as a result of reflection and insights they experienced during action learning discussions.

In addition, lecturer 4, lecturer 5, and lecturer 6 reported a shift in view regarding professional reflection to one of increased appreciation for the role and effectiveness of the reflective practitioner. Lecturer 1 and lecturer 2 described the reflective process as a way to "maintain positive spirit and energy", and lecturer 3 in particular viewed its role as one of "reaffirming synergy and a pioneering spirit of testing paradigms" (Interview, November 2003).

All lecturers reported feeling generally positive about their active learning involvement. Lecturer 2 credited action learning participation with providing the incentive to plan an on-site professional development centre.

The lecturers responded enthusiastically to teaching strategies in the context of their regular instruction. They found that it changed their way of viewing teaching, and their conceptions of teaching became less focused on presenting information and more on helping students learn with understanding. They found that their classes became more interactive, more interested in the subject matter and more enthusiastic about their learning. All of the lecturers in our program intended to continue teaching in this way.

Some lecturers had difficulty fully integrating the teaching strategies with the subject matter. One aspect of integration is to teach the strategies in the context of the course, and encourage students to use them in appropriate circumstances. Another aspect is to teach

the strategies at the most appropriate time: for instance when students are most likely to recognize a need for them. However, integration also involves realizing that effective teaching requires both teaching and learning processes, and that a focus on only one of these processes is inadequate. It takes some time before lecturers and students accept this. At first teachers see teaching learning strategies and teaching subject matter as separate tasks. It is at this time that they are most likely to feel that strategy instruction is talking time away from the subject matter. However, once they realize that effective teaching should involve teaching about learning as well as teaching about subject matter, they are less likely to see this as a problem.

8.6 Strategies for Improving Classroom Teaching.

The lecturers perceived that the action learning has been an effective source of improving teaching in their classroom. These participants found that reflecting on their practice, sharing ideas were significant benefits of conducting action learning that led to improvements in their teaching practice. They clearly perceived four important factors contributing to teaching improvement.

8.6.1 Collegiality supports lecturers' risk taking and satisfaction, which results in improved teaching.

Action learning encourages collegiality through dialogue focused on student outcomes, through conversation about literature in educational journals, and by improving teaching strategies. Lecturer 6 stated "I could share my findings with my colleagues what I found…. To be effective…and what I found not to be effective.." (Interview, November 2003)

Action learning empowers lecturers and gives them freedom to be risk-takers, to experiment in their classes, and to discover improved teaching strategies. Phenomena to investigate emerged from lecturers' own assumptions about what must be improved in

their classrooms. The action learning is to make changes in teaching practice that result in increased student learning.

8.6.2 The importance of reflective practice.

Many lecturers recognized the importance of reflection in learning from everyday experience**.** One lecturer described it this way "well, usually I go back over the day and reflect and think if I was to do that again I wouldn't do it this way" (L3, Interview, November 2003). What was important was "the desire to reflect on what you're doing and how you think about what impact, if any, it has on the students (L2, Interview, November 2003). Lecturer 2 thought of reflection as a form of self-evaluation:

> *There is no doubt that experience is the greatest lecturer tool and I think self-evaluation… They sit down and they look at themselves professionally and they say "that didn't go well or I am not happy with that program, I am not teaching that well; how can I make it better?" (L5, Interview, November 2003).*

Findings also revealed many widely varied aspects of lecturers' learning. These can be grouped into three overlapping categories: individual activity (reflective practice); collaborative activity; and planned activity.

Firstly, lecturers often learn through their own, predominantly individual, activities. In particular they are constantly adjusting and modifying their practice, in response to reactions, interactions and activities in the classroom, and in anticipation of partly new situations. The lecturers in my study most frequently used the term 'trial and error'. Much of the teacher thinking literature conceptualises individual learning as teacher reflection, often following Schon (1983).

In Eraut's (1994) and Beckett's (1996) terms, the former is part of 'hot action', as teachers make rapid professional judgements on the spot in responding to classroom

situations. The latter is part of 'cold action', as teachers think back about something that has happened, or plan ahead, for a subsequent lesson, assessment, curriculum unit, etc.

As well as on-going experience, many lecturers learn through the impact of imposed external change, such as of the new Education Act and new approaches to teaching and learning, or from acquiring and using new teaching materials. Sometimes this consists of modifying an existing lesson or course, sometimes in developing a completely new approach. But even, in the latter case, long-accumulated values, beliefs and practices influence what they do and how they learn. Feeding in to all of this will be ideas learned through reading, through use of the Internet, and through noticing things that are relevant for their work, in a wide variety of situations and contexts:

> *I gain ideas from such activities as visiting exhibitions or the other workplaces, or observing an interesting pattern of student learning in the campus (L3, Interview, November 2003).*

Such individual teacher learning can be opportunistic, or even incidental. On the other hand sometimes there is a deliberate intention to learn something new.

> *I decided that I had to improve my teaching for a changing curriculum, then used a number of strategies to achieve this most of which involved me in 'doing'. Such deliberate learning may focus on the practice of teaching, or on the further development of subject knowledge and expertise (L5, Interview, November 2003).*

A number of lecturers stressed the value of reflection when discussing informal learning. Examples and anecdotes were offered by lecturers, which tend to be of more systematic form such as keeping reflective journals. A number of lecturers particularly stressed the value of reflecting jointly with others. However, several argued that to be most effective it was necessary to have a suitable framework against which to reflect. A

number of the techniques reported for enhancing reflection have advocates within the literature.

It is possible that the identification by lecturers of reflection as a discrete learning method in its own right may understate its importance. It seems likely that many of the other informal learning methods described above rely on reflection as a key element in turning an experience into learning.

Lecturer 4 emphasized the importance of feedback. Examples offered included feedback from students, colleagues. Several stressed the importance of deliberately seeking feedback, or of listening carefully to what people might be telling you indirectly or directly about your performance. The value of formal appraisals for providing feedback on " how they were doing" and helping to identify further development. Some in this team, however, felt that a once a year appraisal, though useful, was not enough. What many seemed to seek was continuous feedback on " how they were doing"
(Field notes, November 2003).

Lecturer 1 reported his learning as deriving from the student as his 'main teacher' through the ways they respond and interact. This, he felt, was something that could only be learnt through actual experience (Interview, November 2003).

Lecturer 2 noted that from reading the literature she had developed 'decision' and practice, which I saw as the "key to being a good teacher…. is to be very sensitive and recognise the problems I have had" (Interview, November 2003).

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> *Read a bit of literature and watching how other people operate, is the main way I have learnt. Development from these learning process, I could then implement things in my classroom (L3, Interview, November 2003).*

Lecturer 1 noted that from reading the literature he had developed 'assertive' practice.

In addition to the student in class, colleagues were the main resource in learning about the classroom situation. Lecturers also learnt from other people (fellow lecturers, student and people outside work). Sometimes this remains a fairly individual process, but often it can be better characterised by our third factor of learning.

8.6.3 Collaboration

A significant proportion of lecturers' learning occurs through collaborative interactions with others. The department and faculty are the main location for such collaboration.

> *Sometimes, collaboration crosses departmental boundaries, either through informal friendships with other lecturers or through working groups (L3, Interview, November 2003).*

Some lecturers also value collaborative learning opportunities outside university such as attending a national conference, both for the presentations and for the meetings with other lecturers in their discipline (Field notes, November 2003).

Collaborative learning includes conversation and discussion, observing and taking an interest in what others do, and joint activity. Joint activities can be relatively formalised, for example in working groups tackling new projects, such as curriculum changes, or two or more lecturers deciding to do something together. Often, it is more informal.

In support of collegial collaboration, Fullan (1999) confirmed that an environment that promotes collaboration between teachers would lead to student achievement. The six lecturers thought that collaboration was a key attribute encouraged by action learning.

Lecturer 1 stated, "Teaching can be very isolating in itself. … So it helps me professionally to be with other people that are doing action learning so I can learn from them" (Interview, November 2003).

I noted that throughout the study I observed ongoing collaboration and several informal collaborative work sessions between staff members (Field Notes, November, 2003). For example, on one occasion a few lecturers briefly gathered to plan and discuss a specific class project. This unprepared meeting began in the hallway at release time and continued for a brief moment in a lecturers' classroom. On another occasion, a few lecturers briefly discussed and shared instructional materials and then moved on to work independently (Written journals, November 2003).

These unprepared meetings would sometimes begin with two lecturers and then quickly include more lecturers. I also noted that it appeared that collaboration could be something that some of the lecturers involved in this study do frequently without the influence of action learning. I observed on several occasions lecturers involved in the study making specific arrangements to support each other in teaching tasks. For example, teachers would meet informally after work to support several colleagues. These meetings had created a somewhat nourishing context for learning for the lecturers and themselves. Collaboration appeared to be a healthy and normal part of this university's professional culture (Field notes, November 2003).

Lecturer 6 stated,

> *I think that action learning could be a way that lecturers could work together, collaborate in a non-extra way. I am into planning together anyway as you saw, but I just think that instead of people being so isolated and doing their things … it would up our profession (Interview, November 2003).*

Lecturer 6's statement that action learning could help her to collaborate in a "non-extra way" is significant (Interview, December 2003). Lecturers must be given the opportunities to work collaboratively in authentic settings that promote learning. For some lecturers it was apparent that learning was so profoundly embedded in their daily

profession, that possibly it was hard for them to see where work and learning begin and end (Field notes, November 2003).

Lecturer 2 felt that having the opportunity to develop her programme as part of a group of other lecturers helped her learn about strategies and how to teach them. It enabled her to talk over difficulties and find solutions from others' experiences. It also stimulated her to reflect on her own practice and beliefs about teaching and learning.

In action learning teams, lecturers also learn with and from others using a 'questioning' style approach to working. Within the teams, they access and draw upon other lecturers' experience and thinking to shape their own actions:

> *In our team, each team member had an opportunity to get feedback and suggestions from the others in the group (L2,Interview, November 2003).*

> *We took turns at sharing our views at our meetings – and we were always prepared to offer and accept feedback (L5, Interview, November 2003).*
> *Working in these teams requires a particular set of behaviours and attitudes: for example, you must value and respect the opinions of your colleagues to make this work (L6, Interview, November 2003).*

> *Using our collective experience and expertise meant that we would find the most practical and effective solution to our problem. (L4, Interview, November 2003).*

> *The best suggestions and practical advice offered in the team came from the lecturers themselves – not the books, the articles or the guest presenters (L3, Interview, November 2003).*

A number highlighted the positive benefits of diversity within teams and of working with people who have different styles and approaches**:** "I can learn from their different ways of doing things" (L1, Interview, November 2003) was a typical comment. However, several pointed to the need for shared values within teams. Learning within teams could be seen as a particular form of collaborative learning.

When lecturers were currently working closely with lecturers from other disciplines, they had found these experiences very formative. The lecturers reported that such experience had exposed them to different ways of doing things, different technical perspectives and different ways of seeing the world.

Lecturers suggested that multi-disciplinary working also encouraged practitioners to look more critically at their own profession, to challenge established practices and to import useful approaches from the other disciplines. Other formative benefits claimed by lecturers for multi disciplinary working such as a cross - fertilisation of ideas leading to more effective problem solving or more creative brainstorming, a more holistic view of professional activity which can promote better professional learning between disciplines (Field notes, November, 2003).

8.6.4 Planned learning

The fourth factor of lecturer learning, planned learning, was much more deliberate, and involved undertaking activities primarily intended for the learning of something new.

The lecturers recommended that beginning lecturers be programmed for extra release to undertake observation of peer, either within or outside the university to participate in team teaching and view other programs This required not only changes in the university but greater resources and support within the system, Since:

> *I learned from the consultant, partly to learn how to better prepare my own class. Often, this learning also involved two levels of collaboration-working with the consultant, and working with my own departmental colleagues, to share their insights (L2, Interview, November 2003).*

Squarely within this fourth category is a wide variety of formal courses and INSET (In-Service Education and Training) activities, short and long, in university or elsewhere:

> C*ourses can be of value, and should not themselves be overlooked. I'm fortunate in comparison with many other lecturers in that attending such courses is seen as a normal if occasional part of my work activity. (L3, Interview, November 2003).*

Some of the difficulties encountered in the action learning project related to demands on time. It is significant that action learning advocates also recognize the need of allocate sufficient time to such process. All six lecturers mentioned time as being a restraining force in essentially all aspects of engaging in action learning. They stated, "Time, time, time. Having time, there never seems to be enough time" , "Well, I think the challenge really is to find the time and the drive to go back and double-check myself " (Interview, November 2003). The researcher noted that on several occasions time was the biggest concern lecturers had about action learning (Field Notes, October, 2003).

For example, when lecturers were asked about challenges they faced in conducting action learning, the lecturers spoke about time being the main reason they were not as far along in the process as they had expected to be or wanted to be. The lecturers were more specific about the need for more time to address the steps involving data.

Lecturer 1 said,

> *The data itself, reading all the papers, grading all the papers,*

you know all that's time consuming and overwhelming along with the million other things that we have to do (Interview, November 2003).

Lecturer 5 stated, "I haven't had time to do it [action learning]. That is really what it is" (Interview, November 2003).

Collegiality, reflective practice, collaboration, and planned learning were indicative of a more positive attitude to practice development in many though not all team members.

8.7 Summary of Learning Outcomes

The evaluation data of the action learning project showed the effect of the action learning on the team members. The major themes involved changing knowledge about teaching, change in practice focusing on interpersonal interaction and multiple strategies rethinking teaching styles, changing pedagogy, and strategies for improving classroom teaching. The constraints of the university prevented lecturers from implementing the strategies fully. The practical alterations and pedagogical shift indicated in many though not all team members a more positive attitude to professional development. Peer support and encouragement were also a positive expression of the group process through some members were subtly pressurized into change.

Chapter 9

A Model of Workplace Learning for Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus

The data presented in chapter 4, chapters 5-7, and the evaluation data of chapter 8 showed a wide variety of learning experiences and events reported by the survey phase and the action learning team. A detailed content analysis of reported experiences led to the production of a model of workplace learning.

It reveals relatively distinct categories which can be referred to as the conditions for lecturer workplace learning at Sripatum University, Chonburi Campus. The results from my survey phase produced the thematic structure as shown as follows.

9.1 The Factors which Impinge Upon Lecturers' Workplace Learning.

Changing Thai Higher Education
- Declaration of new Education Act
- Reform of higher education
- Enhancing professionalization
- International trends, information technology

University policies and practice
- Appraisal process and promotion criteria
- Resources and opportunity
- The executives role

Learning resources
- Students
- Nature of work
- The situations of teaching
- Collaboration and individualism

Some of the conditions facilitated lecturer workplace learning and others inhibited it, while some did both. From the literature review and research findings, each of the conditions were explained along with supporting data.

The key factors identified in this study have been incorporated into a workplace learning model of lecturer development. The model is built upon personal and situational factors.

In this model workplace learning is defined as the conditions and practices employed by lecturers in combination with other factors in the workplace, that contribute to the process of their learning. Workplace learning involves meeting the professional learning needs of individuals in particular work contexts through the facilitation of action and reflection, supported and tempered by collaborative endeavour and reflection on practice.

Retallick et al (1993) reported on workplace learning in the professional development of teachers that the school is a site for teachers' continuing professional development. They constructed a contextual model of teachers' workplace learning which takes into account factors such as social and cultural expectations, the nature of innovation, different teaching situations, resources and system recognition and reward. This work can be used as a basis for the construction of a model for my workplace learning at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus (Figure 12).

The model incorporates a number of conclusions about lecturer professional learning which are based on the action learning experience:

- The workplace is a major influence on lecturers' professional learning and growth.

- Lecturer learning involves learning arising from the formal and informal learning that takes place within workplaces.

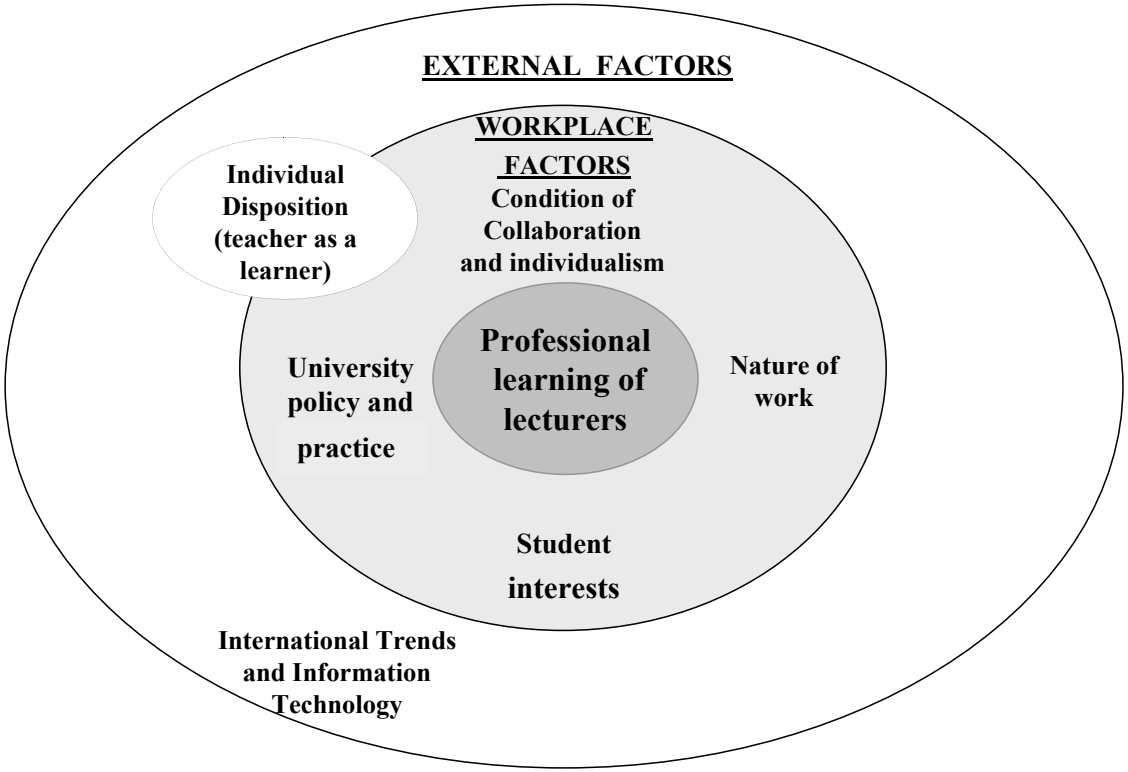
- Professional learning in the workplace involves a progression through stages of development and socialisation and some form of change in relation to the work and professional understandings of individual teachers and groups of teachers.

- Lecturers' professional enquiry, dialogue and collaborative reflection on practice have the potential to enhance lecturers' knowledge, understandings and practice and to strengthen collegial approaches.

The model operates on two levels. On the first level, it accommodates the accumulated incidental, unplanned and informal learning that takes place dependent upon colleagues, events and experiences in the lives of lecturers. A workplace learning approach to improving teaching requires the mediation of experiences and challenges arising from the incidental, unplanned events and, at times, the creation of additional experiences or ways of thinking about and interpreting experiences. On the other level workplace learning is the process of developing new capabilities and understandings through planned or deliberately managed professional relationships in the university.

The workplace learning model of lecturer development to improve teaching is a mediated process of learning focusing on the integration of practical and theoretical knowledge, classroom practice and professional dialogue with colleagues.

Figure 12 Model of Lecturers' Workplace Learning



9.2 Explaining the Model of Workplace Learning at Sripatum University :

9.2.1 External factors

- Changing Thai higher education

National policy impacts on lecturers directly and emerged from the data as a facilitative condition. The higher education reform promotes new curricula and mechanisms for teaching and learning. This is to ensure flexibility and diversification to meet the demands of individual learners, and dynamic national requirements. Adoption of learning innovation and information technology have become featured prominently. Through educational reform, the new approach to teaching and learning being utilised is the student-centered approach, specifically project and group-based activities. This was selected because it provided a significant shift away from the traditional teacher-centered approach (ONEC, 2000, p. 39).

- International trend and IT

The new law along with the impact of international trends and social forces brought change to higher education institutions. The advent of educational technology has brought about significant changes in many ways and adoption of information technology has become featured prominently.

9.2.2 Workplace factors

- University policies and practice

Appraisal process and promotion criteria.

It has long been acknowledged that the reward system for teaching staff is of primary importance in establishing how lecturers choose to direct their efforts. As criteria for

promotion in the area of teaching are developed, it is important that lecturers were engaged in evidence of reflection and subsequent improvement of teaching and learning. The demonstration of educationally sound course development, paper or reports on the development of teaching and learning, contribute to providing evidence for promotion.

Resource and opportunities for lecturers' workplace learning.

The university provides a direct allocation fund for professional development outside the university for specific skills according to the discipline needed, and provides courses or workshops within the university for lecturers, though a common criticism from lecturers was that there is not enough time available to do all that is expected or desired. Lecturers also criticized courses provided by the university as lacking relevance to their classroom or their needs. Lecturers were highly critical of some poorly organised training and development programs and of presentations that were not interactive or practical.

The lecturers felt that they should have more say in what courses were offered or who should conduct them because they know their own field and they also wanted different courses or training for their professional development. However, courses provided by university were still necessary and beneficial for them for purposes such as conducting research and producing academic papers, student-centred learning approach, developing lesson plans, and student assessment methods.

> *It may be more productive for me and my colleagues to realize that there are inevitable tensions between university and individual needs which can best be resolved through an appropriate balance between the two. (Group meeting, November 2003)*

Executive roles

In facilitating change and establishing structures on the campus to enhance lecturer development, some executives were found to be strong agents of change and advocates for lecturer learning while others were criticized by lecturers for lack of support and recognition of what they were trying to achieve.

Learning resources

An important facilitative element of workplace learning for lecturers was dealing with issues of relevance to their classroom teaching and student learning.

It is claimed by lecturers who work in different faculties that differences in the nature of work and academic management transcend to the classroom. Some faculties tend to be more subject-centred than student-centred depending on the nature of disciplines, context, and characteristics of students. Class size may also relevant at this point, some faculty have quite large classes whereas other faculty range in size from small class through to very large classes.

- Students' interest and their learning intentions.

The students' learning has different characteristics depending on each individual's nature and field of study. They also have different educational backgrounds. The lecturers revealed that students have different study habits in different faculties such as some students like group learning, some like individualization, some like lectures, and some have to learn from various method.

- Individual Disposition

Personal life experience / career stage

It clear that less experienced lecturers are usually but not always the youngest staff. Some of them are more experienced from non- teaching jobs. The study found that some teaching strategies came from experiences in their previous work. Therefore, they have different needs and concerns from other beginning lecturers.

More experienced lecturers could make connections between the classroom and the wider context which seems to provide them with a clear sense of purpose and stronger justification for their teaching.

Emotions

It is clearly important to recognize the significance of emotions as lecturers move into more collaborative forms of working and learning. A range of emotions were related to collaborative forms of working and learning. A range of emotions was expressed in the data and they comprise a condition of lecturers learning.

A number of lecturers felt enjoyment in their experience of teacher learning, particularly in collaborative aspects of sharing and working with colleagues:

> *sharing of ideas, working alongside colleagues, working together*
> *in teams we really enjoy it and feel satisfaction. I can learn new things*
> *and bring them back and share them (Group meeting, December 2003).*

Some lecturers in the action learning team felt uncertain or distressed about the success of their project and they hesitated to take action in the implementation of the student-centred approach. The rest of the team suggested that this problem was common in the project. Thus, they tried to do their best to continue collaboration in terms of acting

as critical friends, with more communication amongst the team, and more participation within the team that allowed for better understanding about their implementation (Written journals, November 2003).

- The impact of individual lecturer's disposition to their learning

Through their professional lives, lecturers develop and redevelop themselves, through influences on their work and learning. A lecturer reported that:

> *My learning was self- initiated. Even when there was initially unwelcome pressure to learn imposed from outside I coped by giving them my own meaning and transforming them into something that I was comfortable with and perceived as useful…however it became a positive development of my work (L6, Written journals, September 2003).*

> *I think, as a creative person, I was constantly searching for new ideas and improvements. Such learning was sometimes opportunistic and sometimes planned and my learning was integrated with a view of teaching in my classroom and teaching situation (L3, L7, Written journals, September 2003).*

The stage in career and group membership (in a discipline, department, or group work) in the university had influence on lecturers' learning and practice.

> *I and my team members came from different disciplines so my dispositions to learning and teaching was different (L5, Written journals, September 2003).*

We came from the same discipline but I'm less experienced than my colleagues…. I have experiences from my prior work from a non-academic setting (L4, Written journals, September 2003).

Lecturers bring prior knowledge, understanding and skills with them, which can contribute to their future work and learning.

Such personal competence often goes beyond things that can be learned on a university course, we had a work placement with company and industry, I was able to understand the skill and knowledge application needed in my discipline (Group meeting, December 2003).

- Conditions of collaboration

Both university culture and university policy impact on lecturer learning. Under the higher education reform it is aimed to achieve various goals that affect administrative structure and academic management.

An ethos of support and collegiality has also influenced the experience of lecturers. The condition of support and collegiality was identified through the survey data and action learning. The condition of support and collegiality had a mediating influence on other conditions and practices that contributed to lecturer workplace learning.

The importance of the condition of support and collegiality emerged from a positive organisational climate in university. The effect of these cultures on learning can be summarized from lecturers who reported:

Lecturers in the collaborative faculties or departments had a significant additional dimension to their learning which at its simplest involved the use of an additional range of

learning approaches (L3, Meeting No.2, September 2003)

Lecturers in my faculty had a further advantage because of an explicit focus on continually improving their own performance, structured and supported through the forceful leadership of the head of faculty (L2, L8, Group meeting No.2, September 2003)

I gained experience through close contacts with lecturers in other faculties such as some lecturers in the computer sciences and IT department in my university (L1, L4, Group meeting No.2, September 2003).

In collaborative university cultures where lecturers are keen to share ideas with colleagues, there is likely to be more workplace learning occurring than in individualistic cultures.

The climate of collaboration is more likely to encourage risk-taking with new approaches and strategies since the risk of failure is shared, and is therefore less threatening for each individual (L7, Group meeting No.2, September, 2003).

One of the findings of my study confirmed the nature of variables which influence workplace learning identify by Hager (1997b). Such variables include:

- the workplace environment / culture;
- authentic learning experiences;
- quality of learning materials;
- role of language and literacy; and
- organization size.

The main features of workplace learning are concentrated upon making judgments. Making better judgments represents an aim of workplace learning, and therefore growth

in such learning is represented by a growing capacity to make appropriate judgments in the changing, and often unique, circumstances that occur in many workplaces.

9.3 Facilitating and Inhibiting Conditions

The following table sets out the factors identified from the data which can be used to examine the facilitating and inhibiting conditions of the lecturer workplace learning environments.

Table 5 Lecturers' workplace learning : Facilitating and Inhibiting Conditions.

Facilitating Conditions	Inhibiting Conditions
- The University is viewed as an "educative workplace" for lecturers as well as students	- Only students are viewed as learners in the University
- Principles of adult learning are recognised as important and applied to lecturers' learning	- Principles of adult learning are ignored
- Close collaborative working with colleagues	- Isolation and individualism in the University
- Administrators provide leadership and a vision for improvement	- Lack of administrator support
Lecturers' needs are seen as differentiated on a range of factors including academic disciplines, teaching experience etc.	- Lecturers needs are regarded as the same irrespective of individual differences
- Supported opportunities for personal development that goes beyond University	- Lecturer learning dominated by University agendas
- Opportunity to engage with other working groups	- Work restricted to "home" faculty team/departmental teams
- Support for variations in way of working and learning, for different lecturers & faculty	- Standardised approaches to lecturer learning are imposed
- Lecturers use wide range of learning approach	- Lecturers use narrow range of learning approaches

This analysis facilitated the way to improve lecturer learning. One of the effective ways of increasing the likelihood of such learning is through creating and encouraging more facilitating

conditions. There may be occasions where facilitating conditions are party contradictory. Increasing one might tend to diminish another.

Some inhibiting conditions arise from the nature of work or individual characteristics such as:

- The difficulties of taking time for learning

- Some individual lecturers work in their own closed classrooms and some lecturers rarely have the chance to work with lecturers of other faculties or fellow subject specialists outside the university. Other problems are rooted in current policy and management, and potentially could be addressed: such as over-emphasis on University learning priorities. Scarce resources mean that some changes that might be highly significant for improved lecturer learning will be difficult to accommodate.

However, some of the considerable resources currently devoted to lecturer learning might be more effectively allocated. If there is a will in the system to further enhance lecturer learning, the facilitating conditions can increased at a variety of levels. Though gains will be greatest when several levels of activity are working in harmony, even small localized changes at one level can result in some benefits.

9.4 Approaches to Improving Lecturer Learning at Sripatum University, Chonburi campus

- The need to work with experts

> *We would like to use the help of an expert either from outside or within the university, someone who could also work alongside their in the classroom context (L2, Group meeting, November 2003).*

There was also a suggestion for a mandatory time each month with an expert, and bring in outsiders and to establish exchanges with lecturers and administrators (L1, Group meeting, November 2003).

- In the university the administrators and senior lecturers were excellent role models and were interested in trying out new ideas in the workplace. The action learning meeting reflected this,

The administrator was also very supportive of new initiatives for learning in our university (L6, Group meeting, November 2003).

- Informal discussions, talking about things, sharing effective strategies and discussing concern, as well as through occasions such as staff meetings. Much of workplace learning lecturers encountered has been 'informal' in the sense that it occurred in the classroom or through conversation with colleagues regarding content and teaching practices. However, these should received through the team-teaching conducted with the leading lecturer and head of faculty.

- Promoting adult learning is to reduce the risk of failure

Interest in higher education education professional development has gone beyond the traditional concepts of sabbaticals and academic discipline conferences and has focused on teaching effectiveness. Faculty learning is now being use to address the challenges facing changing in approach of teaching and learning, advances in technology, demand of accountability and educational reform.

Faculty development should concern their characteristics, motivation to learn and to change, understanding the dynamic of faculty's work in their professional roles

(L5, Group meeting, November 2003).
The organizational context and its impact on faculty learning and faculty development (L3, Group meeting, November 2003).

- Meeting needs and priorities

Needs were seen in two domains; teacher needs and university and department or faculty need. Some lecturers viewed the idea of integration of those two domains as important.

> *The university has priorities as well and I think the enforced nature of that is not good in that we're told these are going to be the priorities and this is what to undertake to do on staff development and that doesn't particularly suit the campus and so therefore it doesn't suit everyone's needs or fit in with that university as well (L4, Group meeting , November 2003).*

The features of workplace learning are sessions in both in-service programs provided by university and professional development programs outside university. It is likely to be through individual learning that lecturers have ownership of the learning.

- Reward systems.

> *It would seem that successful workplace learning for individuals and group is supported when there are relevant to the reward systems for lecturers (L2, Group meeting, November 2003)..*

Workplace learning is an essential element in our professional development and the major means by which we improve our teaching, so it would make good sense for university to give greater recognition and reward for it. This would enhance the incentives for lecturer learning.

Chapter 10

Discussion and Conclusion

10.1 Sources of Lecturers' learning

Of all the sources of professional development listed in the survey, the three which were most consistently very highly valued and engaged in the action learning project were:

- Personal ‘trial and error’ such as making direct use of personal experiences of teaching including own observations of student achievement or learning success in courses.
- Consultation with experts and in-service courses in the university.
- Formal and informal discussion and sharing of ideas with fellow academics within the faculty or team.

Each lecturer described experiences that had proved particularity formative to them. They learned some lessons from the situations that had faced in their practice and learned how these had been overcome. From time to time, the experiences in action learning reported overlap with the sources of help touched on in the result from the survey. Personal development and conditions that support learning were offered to a selected group. Fung (2000) and Retallick (1999) support this link that focused attention on the need for professional development to develop reflective processes, especially the ability to be critically reflective. It has highlighted the importance of practitioners constructing professional knowledge through researching their own practice. Finally, it has called attention to a range of personal conditions that need to be considered for professional development to be successful. These include participants’ needs, priorities, capacities, emotional responses, beliefs and values, and attributes such as a positive attitude to learning and other learners and commitment to a personal vision. These dimensions are

the cognitive, emotional and the social process. Two different but integrated processes are involved: the internal acquisition process and the external interaction process between the learner and the material and social environment (Illeris, 2002).

Lecturers have organized their learning around evaluating student learning and on the upon reflection their own teaching. The result is consistent with the literature on professional development strategies that succeed in improving teaching (Hick, 1999; Boud, 1999). The strategies are:

- Individual teacher's conceptual change.
- Teaching teams to support departmental and learning change.
- Flexible learning (especially in the areas of leadership and management of learning, internationalisation, environmental sustainability, and e-learning environment).
- Formal learning units leading to academic credit.
- Reflective practice to support a scholarly, research based approach to learning development.
- Linking assessment with learning.
- Academic evaluation for improvement linked with the university's strategic directions and the departments' interpretations of the plan.

Hick (1999) and Boud (1999) suggest that there seem to be many different and effective approaches but that a focus on conceptual change related to teaching and learning within a specific discipline context, whatever the approach, is important. This relates to my outcomes that effective lecturers' learning encompasses both formal and informal means of support. No single approach can build lecturers' workplace learning. Rather, it is useful to think of providing a continuum of possibilities, with opportunities and support for lecturer-generated learning, discussion, and reflection offered alongside access to outside knowledge.

There are a number of learning approaches that can introduce and support more collegial, ongoing, and informal contexts for lecturer learning overall.

- Well–designed workshops, seminars and courses which offer depth and focus, provide adequate opportunities for practice and grappling with ideas, involve doing real work instead of being "talked at", provide opportunities for consultation with colleagues and experts, and make possible follow-up by classroom consultation and coaching.

- Informal and job-embedded processes are essential to support and extend the learning that takes place in their classes. These can take place on-site or with colleagues.

- Other ways of supporting informal learning. There are a number of other ways in which lecturers work in informal contexts that offer learning opportunities. Many lecturers have found that writing helps them reflect on their practice. Others have become involved in small group collaboration around particular projects or stands of learning. Still others have formed reflective practice teams. For many lecturers, team teaching provides a context for sharing reflections on practice as they work with the ongoing realities, successes, and challenges of teaching. Lecturers also learn through their activities or around the critical activities of teaching and learning such as developing curriculum, designing programs, planning lessons, evaluating student work, developing curriculum rather than in abstractions and generalities. Through reading, discussion, observation, training, or involvement in campus improvement processes, lecturers can acquire specific knowledge or skills about the issue being examined, and develop broad-based understanding through the experience.

These elements need to be part of a seamless process of professional learning that continues through the early years of their teaching, and extends through years of developing accomplished practice. Accordingly, Paitoon(2000) also highlights the importance of new a direction for faculty development in Thailand. He proposed that

faculty development could be regarded as a principal innovation of Thai higher education.

It is a device and technique which will lead to the efficient development of Thai higher education. The activities and their implementation must be adjusted according to the suitability and some circumstances.

My data leads to the following important observations about courses, most of which are not new:

- Short courses or training events result in effective learning if and when matters raised are taken back and further developed as part of on-going practice (either individually, or as part of collaborative activity).

- Short courses can be ineffective, if the lecturers attending do not personally value the experience.

- Courses outside university premises are valuable in enabling contact and collaboration with lecturers and others in related but different situations.

- Long courses can have a deep and lasting influence on the ways in which lecturers understand, see and approach their work.

Short courses that seem to fulfil these criteria include teaching and learning modules, teaching mentor workshops and work with junior faculty and senior faculty. These could be conducted by current faculty who have achieved teaching excellence in the classroom and for less experience staff who would be willing to work with the group and the trainers over a 1-2 day period.

10.2 How Faculty Professionals go a About Learning What They Have to Learn

Watkins and Marsiel (1993) and Boud and Garrick (1999) indicated there are many different types of workplace learning opportunities. The term 'workplace learning' embraces a significant shift in contemporary human resource development and adult education theory. It encompasses initial training programs but also and more importantly, targets learning at all organizational levels and in more diverse ways.

Faculty professionals are adult learners and workplace learners. They go about learning what they have to learn through different processes, both formal and informal. However, revealing workplace learning processes can be a challenging effort, because it is believed that a considerable part of this learning is informal.

Many attributes of the lecturers' learning process were informal, large parts of the content were informal, the purposes were at least partly informal, in so far as the lecturers learned for voluntary reasons, often largely unaware that they were actually learning, and the location or setting was partly informal. But there were more formal attributes of that learning also. Planned learning, in-service programs or formal course learning, played significant if relatively minor roles in the learning of most of the lecturers in the study. Such learning was not separate from their everyday learning. Rather the two were interrelated, as when one of the lecturers took ideas from a planned learning course and integrated them, not only into their own teaching, but also into the discussions and practices with their colleagues.

Most of the learning processes were informal, resulting from everyday working practices. Learning took place in the lecturers' own workplace, but with occasional short courses elsewhere. Much learning, being an ongoing part of lecturers' practice, was focused on their personal professional interests. However, the constraints of teaching timetables, limited resources and university development priorities meant that much professionally relevant learning that lecturers wanted for their personal development

proved impossible to access. Lecturers were often forced to learn things that the university required them to do: for example, to use computers in the classroom.

The main emphasis was on the improvement of teaching skills and the acquisition of new ones. There was a very limited engagement with propositional knowledge. There was some learning from experts, either in short courses or than more experienced colleagues. Learning was more a matter of sharing and exchanging ideas, rather than one-way transmission.

As Van Woerkom (2003) points out, informal or non-formal learning appears to be defined by what it is *no*t. It is not learning a subject to a prescribed framework; it is not accredited and there are no teachers present (Eraut, 2000).

It is expected that a large part of workplace learning is informal learning. In the literature, the perspective on this learning ranges from 'strong tacit' to 'uncomplicated'. This concerns the question whether 'tacitness' is dependent on the knowledge or on the learner. According to the strong tacit view (Lahn, 2003) some knowledge can *not* be revealed. In order to become alert to this kind of learning and knowledge, the following characteristics need to be taken into account:

- Integrated with daily routines (at work) (Marsick & Watkins, 2001).
- Mostly not highly conscious (Marsick & Watkins, 2001).

What truly distinguishes informal learning from formal learning is that it is embedded in the working process and is not explicitly guided by the teacher or school assignments. Typical outcomes of informal learning concern socialisation and participation competencies, such as 'understanding and working effectively in a team' (Callahan, 1999; referred to in Marsick & Watkins, 2001).

Workplace learning has emerged as a significant site of adults' informal experiential learning, with implications for the provision and shape of formal education (Beckett &

Hager 2000). Beckett and Hager show how to characterize a new epistemology of practice through both empirical and conceptual innovation, and thus advance the detail of this new informal workplace learning. This epistemology deals in five characteristics central to lifelong learning anyway, namely: the contingent (rather than exclusively formal, sustained, and systematic studies); the practical (rather than exclusively the theoretical); the process (rather than exclusively the assimilation of content); the particular (rather than exclusively the universal and a priori as the 'context'); and the affective and the social domains (rather than exclusively the cognitive the domain) (Beckett & Hager 2000).

Beckett and Hager (2002) are also convinced that making judgements is a central holistic workplace activity that is the expression of practice-based informal learning from work. Judgements provide a powerful way to make sense of the practice-based informal learning. The six key features of practice-based workplace informal learning are key features lists as follows:

- Practice-based informal workplace learning is organic / holistic.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is contextual.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is activity- and experience-based.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning arises in situations where learning is not the main aim.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is activated by individual learners rather than by teachers / trainers.
- Practice-based informal workplace learning is often collaborative / collegial.

In this view, learning changes both learners and their environment and learners are part of that environment. The outcomes of this study support this view. Sripatum's workplace learning involved action activated by individual lecturers in particular contexts through reflection on experience, supported by collaborative endeavour. Although, the workplace is a major influence on lecturers' learning, formal workplace learning is a mediated process, focusing on the integration of practical and theoretical knowledge.

Therefor, lecturer learning involves learning arising from both the formal and informal learning that take part within workplace.

10.3 Conditions of Workplace Learning

The conditions of workplace learning comprise the environments, circumstances, situations, and states of being that affect, support, promote, engage or facilitate the learning of workers or employees. Holliday (1994) attempted to identify conditions of teacher learning by reviewing a wide range of literature from adult learning, teachers' work and the teaching workplace. He presented five conditions of workplace learning, and how these conditions promote the workplace learning of teachers. These five conditions are: Self, Personal Meaning, Action, Collegiality, and Empowerment. Holliday (1998 Module 2) explained further that these five conditions of teacher learning promote the learning process. These conditions are interrelated, in that they each enhance the ability of the others to promote the learning process. They are also symbiotically related, in that they are naturally interdependent, so that any one condition would be debilitated if separated from the others.

Taking an educational setting as an example, and using Holliday's model (which is my major source of analyzing these conditions), the major conditions of learning that exist in the workplace of faculty professionals are presented as follows :

Learner. The learner or 'self' appears to foster profound learning. The 'self' involves psychological factors and a description of the internal traits and manifest behaviors exhibited by the learner. Conditions for profound learning exist when faculty professionals feel good about themselves and have a positive sense of self-worth as persons and learners. Learner characteristics are particular behaviours that faculty professionals bring to the learning process. Several personal and background factors have been found to influence their learning approaches, such as individual capability, readiness, and motivation, which produce interest, enthusiasm, appreciation, and dedication.

Context. Context is considered in the broadest sense to mean anything external to the learners, including local setting, historical context, cultural and social world views; values, behaviours, and standards; availability of resources; information, people; and the significance of timing to the learning process. This condition exists when the context is conducive to learning and the workplace is viewed as a learning organization. This condition exists when organizational culture facilitates learning, for example, a culture of collaboration, empowerment, critical reflection, a sense of belonging, a sense of professional community, a climate of support, a spirit of sharing, a commitment to learn together and a more questioning approach to improvement and more risk-taking.

Autonomy. This includes autonomy of content, the extent to which staff control what they learn; autonomy of learning method, the extent to which staff control how they learn; generation of new knowledge, the extent to which staff generate new knowledge as distinct from simply assimilating existing knowledge; autonomy in what to learn, how to learn, and where to learn which will enhance interest, enthusiasm, appreciation and dedication to learning.

Relevance and benefits. Faculty professionals should be able to see the relevance and benefits of workplace learning with its applicability and its impact on job performance. They must be made to believe it will increase their effectiveness, add to their professional knowledge, and enhance their skills. It will result in improvement of the workplace at the individual, group, and institutional level.

Practice. This condition exists when faculty professionals have the opportunity to develop, experiment, and apply their ideas and knowledge in action to see if they work. They must work out, stage by stage what is involved in their ideas, sometimes by trial and error, thereby running the risk of making mistakes. However, this offers experiences that are valued as a rich resource for learning and reflection in action. They help others to plan how to meet challenges at work. The workplace that allows workers to do this,

promotes learning and increases workers' workplace learning. As Revans (1983) said, there is no learning without action and no action without learning.

10.4 Models for the Future

The discussion above would suggest that there seem to be many different and effective approaches but that a focus on conceptual change related to teaching and learning within a specific discipline context, whatever the approach, is important.

Boud (1999) indicates that the most effective location for academic development is within the department:

> *Most academic development takes place in locations where academics spend most of their time; departments, professional settings and research sites. It takes the form of exchanges with colleagues, interacting with students, working on problems, writing and associated activities. It is informal and not normally viewed as development.*

This view focuses on the reciprocal nature of peer learning. Hicks (1999) provides four models for the 'delivery' of academic development. The 'central model' is 'traditional', strong and based on centralised activity with some local activity. The 'dispersed model' is a form of departmentally organised professional development (this is the model Boud is referring to). The 'mixed model' relies on central generic activities and discipline-specific activities, has the potential for duplication and suffers from lack of coordination. Finally the 'integrated model' suggests that developers' and academics' work is interrelated and fed into one another through a collaborative process. Hicks suggests that these models have implications for access to programs or development activities, resourcing, ownership, impact and scholarship (p.48-49).

I would suggest that an integrated model would be appropriate in the current higher educational context. There is a place for centralised units where academics have subject knowledge of higher education. These academics can facilitate and enhance the quality of department-specific developmental programs. The 'formal' learning units and workshops still need to provide access to 'generic' topics, but the aims of these sessions would still be conceptual change, reflection on experience and providing opportunities for cross-disciplinary interactions. The work of the academic developer within departments needs to be focused on the essential needs of the department as well as on encouraging the development of individuals. The role of an academic developer (and the academic development unit!) needs to be characterised by flexibility and an awareness of different levels of support.

This flexible focus would need to be applied:

- At departmental level for restructuring, curriculum change, quality development, evaluation, fulfilling institutional requirements, helping departments explore the implications of strategic directions.

- In consultation with the department leaders such as Deans, Heads of School, Program directors, and full-time and fractional academics at all levels.

- Through an awareness of the developmental needs of each of these groups. For instance, support for Deans would be through discussion of their departments' needs to determine the direction for academic support for the year; support at institutional level through appropriate committees that focus on the quality of teaching and learning; working with program directors for whole program development; working with teams of teachers on specific projects; working with academics through participation in 'formal' professional development activities; helping departments set up internal academic support structures.

10.5 Organisational Implications for the Enhancement of Academic Development

Obviously, moving towards a conceptual-change, department-focused program will need ongoing support. Resources would need to be made available not only for the ongoing work of the development unit, but also to provide support for department members who take on developmental roles. As my workplace a professional studies and continuing education centre has been developed to provide a quality education with a focus on practical application for the excellence in teaching.

The scholarly nature of the work involved in developing quality in teaching and learning needs to be recognised as legitimate academic work within the department and university. This recognition could be at department level, and also at institution level in promotion, tenure and research applications. In some departments, research on teaching and learning would need to be recognised as important and meaningful. Evaluation of quality in teaching and learning would need to be developed and maintained in order to document, inform and enhance change. An ideal approach to academic development, then, would be one based on a conceptual change model, one that is firmly integrated with specific department directions and needs, that is consultative and recognises the different developmental focuses of all levels of the academic community, and finally, one that leads to the continuing development of quality learning and teaching.

This advice for lecturers is heartening, given the relations found between conception of teaching and learning and what lecturers actually do. It seems that an ideal approach to academic development would be one where lecturers are helped to explore their conceptions of learning and teaching and their related strategies. It does not indicate however how this should be done, or what may be the most effect strategies to use. This problem may be solved by developing systems where lecturers' awareness of their environment and understanding of the environment could be challenged.

10.6 Conclusion

A workplace learning model of lecturer development is proposed in this chapter as a potent form of lecturer learning, based on professional development dialogue, collaboration, inquiry and reflection on practice. The *Workplace Learning Model* in chapter 9 can also be described as a process of professional socialisation wherein lecturers and their colleagues develop shared understandings, purposes and values as well as build interdependencies that complement or perhaps supplant the formal structures.

Key factors that contribute to effective lecturers' workplace learning are identified through this model. Of critical importance is the existence of an ethos of collegiality and support in the university. A number of other factors stem from this condition. The model presents teaching strategies as more than the transmission of skills and understandings from one of lecturers to another. It describes the dynamic interrelationship between factors and presents teaching strategies as transactional and transformational processes of lecturer learning–processes founded on a constructivist learning theory.

Consequently any attempt to reform education in the interests of individual and broader social and economic development, is linked to sustained transactional and transformational lecturer learning processes.

However, as implied in the *Workplace Learning Model*, improving teaching can be more than a process of skills transmission. It is certainly a process of professional socialisation but the highly contextualised nature of effective lecturer learning is dependent upon the professional experiences and nature of professional relationships in the workplace**.**

The conditions and practices identified in this study make critical contributions to the process of lecturer learning. They describe the complex interactions that lead to personal and professional growth and that contribute to the professional socialisation of lecturers.

The *Workplace Learning Model* proposed through this study, provides dynamic, interactive and valued professional learning environments for lecturers.

> *In this university there were strong professional relationships amongst colleague lecturers, supervisors, administrators, and students. The interactive nature of these relationships made lecturer learning and professional socialisation processes of dynamic tension (Group meeting, November 2003).*

While experienced by individuals, the process of lecturer learning is socially negotiated as suggested in the literature reviewed in chapter 2. The *Workplace Learning Model* of lecturer development provides a more sophisticated opportunity for lecturers to engage in the process of learning to teach and to become professional lecturers**.** The model provides a process of lecturer learning through supportive, professional collaborative relationships with practitioner colleagues that in turn foster professional dialogue, enquiry and reflection on practice. By opening up the possibility of transactional and transformational learning a *Workplace Learning Model* of lecturer development sets the scene for subsequent professional learning and development.

The model encompassed both external factor and workplace factors to constitute a more effective professional development and involved in building learning-focused "communities of practice" on campus. The research also affect the future professional development of faculty staff at Sripatum University. The professional development processes should be energised through learning communities. The University should give greater attention to the possibilities of mentoring for facilitating workplace learning of lecturers. The concept of the university as an educative workplace/learning community should become a more explicit feature of restructuring efforts.

The impact of lecturers' learning on improved student learning lies in identifying the importance of professional development that enhance lecturers' understandings of (i) the content they teach; (ii) the ways in which students learn that content; (iii) how that

content can be represented and conveyed in ways that are meaningful to student: and (iv) how well their students are progressing in relation to expectations for learning.

The action learning team suggested that lecturers' knowledge and beliefs about the content they teach and about how students learn are important determinants of teaching effectiveness. The professional learning programs should engage lecturers in the content to be taught and provide research- based knowledge about how students learn that subject matter. The frequency and quality of conversations among lecturers about classroom learning and teaching is important to create cultures in which the learning community. The effective lecturer learning is data- driven and occurs through the practice and analysis evidence of the relationship between teaching practices and student learning.

I envisage that lecturers should set up and action learning group who shared similar concern in their own faculty or established smaller subsets in their discipline. It should also have a sponsor who ensures the action learning team is able to access the resources it need to progress action learning teams form partnerships with outside bodies such as professional associations universities and other academic organisation. They do this to tap into existing expertise which often provides teams with material for their on-going reflection.

The approach of faculty development also involved faculty developers working with head of faculty,they need to foster learning climates in their departments and faculty. Faculty developers might work with departmental groups or sub-groups to help them examine their teaching practice, the beliefs about teaching and learning that inform that practice, the assumptions they hold about what does and does not work in the classrooms and the level of their collegiality around issues of teaching.

These kinds of discussions would foster the "true collegiality" within faculty around issues of teaching and learning as well as provide instruction into different approaches to teaching. This focus on group process is more organizational development than faculty development, and would require both the active cooperation of department groups and a

shift in focus, training, and perhaps philosophy for faculty developers. Whilst such activities may be long-established in many western universities, they represent a major change in the focus of Thai universities. Their implementation arising from faculty participation and action learning will render them more fully accepted than if they were to copy overseas practice.

My recommendation is for further research into that mix of workplace learning and formal learning which best develops particular teaching expertises and promotes effective student learning outcomes. This research shows clearly demonstrated how the university can become an ‘education workplace’ for lecturers, as well as for students.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Faculty Questionnaire

FACULTY WORK AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

This study aims to find out what faculty believe really helps them with their teaching. You can assist by completing this brief questionnaire. The information will be used to improve professional development at your workplace. Thank you for participating in the study.

Please begin by responding to the question below and then proceed overleaf.

Place a (✓) where appropriate.

Are you Female ☐ M☐

How many years have you been teaching?

0 - ☐
5 - ☐
more than 10 ☐

1. How has your teaching improved ?

This item is designed to find out which aspects of your teaching you feel have improved significantly in recent years.

Think about your teaching over the last few years (or since you began teaching if this is a shorter period).

Please circle the number of each aspect which you feel has definitely improved.

Aspects of your Teaching
1. Understanding Content /curriculum
2. Relating to Students
3. Instructional Planning
4. Organizing/managing classroom
5. Using effective teaching strategies
6. Assessing student learning
7. Innovating – eg. Changing the way things are done in your classroom or university
8. Other (please specify)

2. What has helped you improve ?

This item is designed to find out the sources of help which you believe enabled you to improve the aspects on the previous page.

Look opposite at the numbers you circled , Circle these same numbers on the shaded part of the table below.

For each number you have circled , work down the column and write A B C or D to indicate how important the "Sources of help" were in supporting/promoting the improvements you have made. Go down one column at a time.

Scale
A= Very important
B = Important
C = Some Importance
D = No importance

	Aspects of your teaching which have definitely improved							
Sources of Help	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
On-the job experience and reflection								
Observation of other faculty staff								
Discussions with colleagues								
Formal Evaluation of teaching performance								
Consult with specialist								
Study for formal award								
In-service programs provided by the university								
Professional development programs								
outside university								
Other (Please specify)								

3. What would you like to improve in the future ?

This item is designed to identify which aspects of your teaching you would definitely like to improve.

Please circle the number of each aspect you would like to improve significantly over the next three years.

Aspects of your Teaching
1. Understanding Content /curriculum
2. Relating to Students
3. Instructional Planning
4. Organizing/managing classroom
5. Using effective teaching strategies
6. Assessing student learning
7. Innovating – eg. Changing the way things are done in your classroom or university
8. Other (please specify)

4. How would you like to be helped ?

This item is designed to find out sources of help you feel would best assist you make the improvements you indicated on the previous page.

Look opposite at the numbers you circled. Circle these same numbers on the shaded part of the table below.

For each number you have circled work down the column and write A B C or D to indicate how important the "Sources of Help" could be in supporting/promoting the improvements you would like to make. Go down one column at a time.

Scale

A= Very important
B = Important
C = Some Importance
D = No importance

	Aspects of your teaching would like to improved							
Sources of Help	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
On-the job experience and reflection								
Observation of other faculty staff								
Discussions with colleagues								
Formal Evaluation of teaching performance								
Consult with specialist								
Study for formal award								
In-service programs provided by the university								
Professional development programs								
outside university								
Other (Please specify)								

5. Choose an aspect of your professional development which has changed significantly over the last few years. Describe that change using the sub-headings below.

(i) The Change (how/what changed?)

(ii) The Context (who initiated/what prompted the change?)

(iii) The factors which have contributed most to that change

6. Other comments.

Follow – up attend workplace learning program

A number of faculty will be invited to participate in follow-up action learning program regarding their recent professional development experiences.

Would you be willing to participate ? YES ☐

☐ NO

If YES, please print and sign your name here and state the name of your school.

NAME ……..

SIGNATURE……...

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Evaluation Reaction

What was your experiences of working in the action learning team ?.

What was your comments on the action learning processes and their success?.

What was your attitude about your involvement in the action learning team?.

2. Evaluation Learning

What was the important lesson that was learned by the action learning team as a direct result of the team experience?.

What was the important lesson that you, as an individual, learning by participating on the team?.

How do you feel that your learning from the action Learning team experience can help you in the future? Why do you think so?.

3. Evaluation on-the-job behaviour change

What are any changes you have tried to make on your teaching as a direct result of your experience on the action learning team?.

What changes, if any have you noted in the individual's on-the-job behavior during the time you have been participating on an action learning team? Please list those changes and describe what they were and how you noticed them.

4. Evaluation organisational results

What was the benefit to be university as a direct result of your participation in action learning project?.

Appendix C

Information about participants

Lecturer 1(L1) is representative from Faculty of Accounting. L1 taught in the first year course Accounting 1. L1 had 5 years teaching experience.

Lecturer 2(L2) is representative from Faculty of Business Administration. L2 taught in the second- year course Management. L2 had 1 years teaching experience.

Lecturer 3 (L3) is representative from Faculty of Communication Arts. L3 taught in the third- year course Writing for Public relations. L3 had 3 years teaching experience.

Lecturer 4(L4) is representative from Faculty of Informatics. L4 taught in the second year course Creating Basics Software program. L4 had 11 years teaching experience.

Lecturer 5(L5) is representative from Faculty of Law. L5 taught in the fourth- year course in Criminal Law. L5 had 7 years teaching experience.

Lecturer 6(L6) is representative from Faculty of Liberal Arts. L6 taught in the first year foundation course . L6 had 10 years teaching experience.

Appendix D Summary of the themes learn by the action learning team						
Theme ~~Team member~~	Lecturer 1	Lecturer 2	Lecturer 3	Lecturer 4	Lecturer 5	Lecturer 6
1.How learning occurred	My learning was circled around my expectations of how could an academic staff group facilitate change. I realised that the benefits of the project were for me, for u for the students, for the institution, for the community and for other people who felt the need for improvement in their practices	I believe my learning could be more valuable when we, as the learners, are being involved in the process and reflecting on that involvement. I think I need to improve the way I learn and communicate with others. communicate with others. My learning experience has arrived at the point that I should evaluate the way I operate with others			Learning is affected by two main factors, from within and outside the learner. From inside the learner, by this I mean psychological aspects such as motivation, interest, and ability or capacity to learn; from outside the learner, physical conditions or environmental atmosphere where the learning process takes place will inevitably influence the achievements of the learner. The more inside and outside factors are maintained at sufficient levels, the more chance the learner has to become a good learner	
2. A more structured approach to teaching		It [action learning] is all about results and making changes to maximize the results at your next implementation. So I believe that it has helped me to be more logical and structured in my process	I think that it gives me more support for who I am as a teacher and it helps give a focus	This semester is truly the first time I came across a defined structure for action learning, and this being my first experience with this I think it's challenged me to think about improving my teaching practice		

Summary of the themes learn by the action learning team

Theme / Team member	Lecturer 1	Lecturer 2	Lecturer 3	Lecturer 4	Lecturer 5	Lecturer 6
3. Changing Knowledge about teaching			Yes, we are always continually changing things as a teacher, but it gives a focus for how you are doing it as opposed to where just in your mind you are continually changing			I'm more informed about the process, I've read the books, I am doing a lot more of taking information before I do something to see if it really makes a difference
4. Changing Practice	becoming a facilitator getting the teacher out of the attention	1.participation in the action learning program made me a better teacher because I now have much more knowledge about my teaching 2. increased incidents of team-teaching and collegial peer assessments as indications that incidents of professional interaction have increased as a result of their professional development experiences.	using journals and exit notes as a matter of course with students after observing an increase in teacher-student interaction accompanying this . strategy	1.not so critical of myself 2. increased incidents of team-teaching and collegial peer assessments as indications that incidents of professional interaction have increased as a result of their professional development experiences.	use of lecture delivery systems have become less frequent and have been replaced by discussions, presentations and peer evaluations	1.what works, and what doesn't work. This affirmation to experiment with innovative strategies outside of my normal comfort zone was also reflected in references to feelings of increased professional confidence 2. increased incidents of team-teaching and collegial peer assessments as indications that incidents of professional interaction have increased as a result of their professional development experiences.

Summary of the themes learn by the action learning team

Team member / Theme	Lecturer 1	Lecturer 2	Lecturer 3	Lecturer 4	Lecturer 5	Lecturer 6
5.Changing Pedagogy	1.To make greater attempts to model various ways of knowing, skills, and attitudes deemed desirable for learners to integrate.L spoke of "flexibility and adaptability" 2.the reflective process as a way to "maintain positive spirit and energy"	1.To make greater attempts to model various ways of knowing, skills, and attitudes deemed desirable for learners to integrate.L spoke of "partnership" 2.the reflective process as a way to "maintain positive spirit and energy"	1.To make greater attempts to model various ways of knowing, skills, and attitudes deemed desirable for learners to integrate.L spoke of "flexibility and adaptability" 2.viewed its role as one of "reaffirming synergy and a pioneering spirit of testing paradigms"	shift in view regarding professional reflection to one of increased appreciation for the role and effectiveness of the reflective practitioner.	1.To make greater attempts to model various ways of knowing, skills, and attitudes deemed desirable for learners to integrate.L spoke of "flexibility and adaptability" 2.shift in view regarding professional reflection to one of increased appreciation for the role and effectiveness of the reflective practitioner.	1.tertiary teachers consider re-examination of authority and dominance issues by shifting the spotlight away from the instructor-as-performer to one highlighting student-as "getting out of the directive mode" , as "learning to back off" 2.shift in view regarding professional reflection to one of increased appreciation for the role and effectiveness of the reflective practitioner.
6.Strategics for improving classroom teaching						
6.1 Collegiality supports						I could share my findings with my colleagues what I found…. To be effectiv and what I found not to be effective
6.2 Reflective practice	1.'main teacher' through the ways they respond and interact. This, he felt, was something that could only be learnt through actual experience	1.What was important was "the desire to reflect on what you're doing and how you think about what impact, if any, it has on the students. Lecturer 2 thought of reflection as a form of self-evaluation	1."well, usually I go back over the day and reflect and think if I was to do that again I wouldn't do it this way"	importance of feedback. feedback from students, colleagues. Several stressed the importance of deliberately seeking feedback, or of listening carefully to what people might be telling you indirectly or directly abou	1.There is no doubt that experience is the greatest lecturer tool and I think self-evaluation… They sit down and they look at themselves professionally and they say "that didn't go well or I am not happy with that program,	

Summary of the themes learn by the action learning team

Theme / Team member	Lecturer 1	Lecturer 2	Lecturer 3	Lecturer 4	Lecturer 5	Lecturer 6
6.2 Reflective practice		2."key to being a good teacher…. is to be very sensitive and recognise the problems I have had"	2.Read a bit of literature and watching how other people operate,is the is the main way I have learnt. Development from these learning process, I could then implement things in my classroom	your performance	I am not teaching that well; how can I make it better?" 2.I decided that I had to improve my teaching for a changing curriculum, then used a number of strategies to achieve this most of which involved me in 'doing'. Such deliberate learning may focus on the practice of teaching, or on the further development of subject knowledge and expertise	
6.3 Collaboration	1."Teaching can be very isolating in itself. … So it helps me professionally to be with other people that are doing action learning so I can learn from them"	1.having the opportunity to develop her programme as part of a group of other lecturers helped her learn about strategies and how to teach them 2.In our team, each team member had an opportunity to get feedback and suggestions from the others in the group	1.Sometimes, collaboration crosses departmental boundaries, either through informal friendships with other lecturers or through working groups 2.The best suggestions and practical advice offered in the team came from the lecturers themselves – not the books, the articles or the guest presenters	1.Using our collective experience and expertise meant that we would find the most practical and effective solution to our problem	1.We took turns at sharing our views at our our meetings – and we were always prepared to offer and accept feedback	1.I think that action learning could be a way that lecturers could work together, collaborate in a non-extra way. I am into planning together anyway as you saw, but I just think that instead of people being so isolated and doing their things … it would up our profession

Summary of the themes learn by the action learning team

Theme / Team member	Lecturer 1	Lecturer 2	Lecturer 3	Lecturer 4	Lecturer 5	Lecturer 6
6.3 Collaboration						2.Working in these teams requires a particular set of behaviours and attitudes: for example, you must value and respect the opinions of your colleagues to make this work
6.4 Planning learning		I learned from the consultant, partly to learn how to better prepare my own class. Often, this learning also involved two levels of collaboration- working with the consultant, and working with my own departmental colleagues, to share their insights	Courses can be of value, and should not themselves be overlooked. I'm fortunate in comparison with many other lecturers in that attending such courses is seen as a normal if occasional part of my work activity			