

PARTNERSHIPS IN COURSE EVALUATION: THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELLING ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Sally Rigby

Abstract

The British Association for Counselling (BAC) accredits counsellor training alongside its other accreditation schemes (for individual counsellors, trainers and supervisors of counselling practice). At a time when statutory regulation for the counselling profession is on the political agenda, BAC has begun to examine all their accreditation schemes for appropriateness and effectiveness. This research was designed to assess the effectiveness of the partnership stage of the course accreditation scheme. The scheme provides for accredited course teams to be partnered with another accredited course team, with a view to providing support and to monitor the implementation of any conditions or recommendations made upon accreditation.

Using qualitative and quantitative research techniques a number of themes emerged from the author's findings. Effectiveness depended upon participants' experience of the scheme. In terms of support and mentoring the scheme was deemed effective, although some administrative difficulties were highlighted. The need for the development of trust between participants was viewed as paramount and whether or not this occurred depended mainly on the personalities involved. There were also some reservations about the monitoring component of the scheme.

The findings led to the development of a model for partnership activity, which is based on four dimensions: partnership; mentoring and support; the relationship between the two partners; and the relationship between BAC and the course.

UMI Number: U150686

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U150686

Published by ProQuest LLC 2015. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

**PARTNERSHIPS IN COURSE EVALUATION:
THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELLING
ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Education

At the University of Leicester

by

Sally Maxine Dani Rigby BSocSC PGCE

October 2000



Partnerships in Course Evaluation: The British Association for Counselling Accreditation Scheme

Abstract

The British Association for Counselling (BAC) accredits counsellor training alongside its other accreditation schemes (for individual counsellors, trainers and supervisors of counselling practice). At a time when statutory regulation for the counselling profession is on the political agenda, BAC has begun to examine all their accreditation schemes for appropriateness and effectiveness. This research was designed to assess the effectiveness of the partnership stage of the course accreditation scheme. The scheme provides for accredited course teams to be partnered with another accredited course team, with a view to providing support and to monitor the implementation of any conditions or recommendations made upon accreditation.

Using qualitative and quantitative research techniques a number of themes emerged from the author's findings. Effectiveness depended upon participants' experience of the scheme. In terms of support and mentoring the scheme was deemed effective, although some administrative difficulties were highlighted. The need for the development of trust between participants was viewed as paramount and whether or not this occurred depended mainly on the personalities involved. There were also some reservations about the monitoring component of the scheme.

The findings led to the development of a model for partnership activity, which is based on four dimensions: partnership; mentoring and support; the relationship between the two partners; and the relationship between BAC and the course.

Key Words

Partnerships, Mentoring, Peer Mentoring, Accountability, Evaluation, Peer Evaluation

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Tony Bush for his excellent support in the role of supervisor; Pia Dinesen for help with designing the questionnaire; Chris Godfrey for administrative support and Gail Richmond for the unenviable task of proof reading. I would also like to thank my family for the constant support throughout; BAC for allowing me time to undertake the research and all the participants.

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION:	
Context	6
Research	13
Summary	15
2. LITERATURE REVIEW:	
Introduction	16
Partnerships	17
Mentoring	29
Accountability	45
Evaluation	60
Summary	82
3. METHODOLOGY:	
Introduction	83
Methodological Approaches	83
Data Collection	94
Summary	112
4. PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION:	
Introduction	113
Interviews	113
Documentary Analysis	118
Summary	121
5. PRESENTATION OF SURVEY FINDINGS:	
Introduction	122
Structure	123
Purpose	125
Process	134
Outcomes	146
Summary	156
6. CASE STUDIES:	
Introduction	157
Case Study One	158
Case Study Two	165
Case Study Three	172
Case Study Four	179
Case Study Five	187
Summary	195

7.	ANALYSIS:	
	Introduction	198
	Partnerships	199
	Mentoring	205
	Accountability	212
	Evaluation	214
	Structure	223
	Summary	228
8.	CONCLUSION:	
	Introduction	229
	Overview of Findings	229
	Main Concepts Derived from Literature	232
	Partnership Activity in Counselling	244
	Recommendations for Change	249
	Significance of the Study	251
	Summary	252
9.	REFERENCES	253
10.	APPENDICES:	
	Appendix 1 - Interview Schedule	259
	Appendix 2 - Interview Schedule	260
	Appendix 3 - Interview Schedule	261
	Appendix 4 - Pilot Questionnaire	262
	Appendix 5 - Questionnaire	269
	Appendix 6 - Interview Schedule	278

Abbreviations

BAC	British Association for Counselling
CAMG	Courses Accreditation Management Group
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEU	Further Education Unit
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Context

British Association for Counselling

The British Association for Counselling is a membership organisation. It currently has 16000 individual members and 1000 organisational members. It was founded in 1977, growing out of the Standing Conference for the Advancement of Counselling.

BAC is a charity, limited by guarantee. Its Trustees/Directors are its Management Committee. The Management Committee delegates specific responsibilities to Committees and Working Groups. There are seven Divisions representing work-settings or specialist interest groups, for example the Association of Counsellors at Work and RACE (Race and Cultural Education). There are also autonomous Local Groups that are affiliated to BAC. Volunteers, from the membership, run these Committees and Groups, supported by paid staff from the BAC Head Office.

BAC has two organisational objectives – as stated in its Memorandum and Articles of Association:

- To promote and provide education and training for counsellors working in either professional or voluntary settings, whether full or part-time, with a view to raising the standards of counselling and psychotherapy for the benefit of the community and in particular for those who are the recipients of counselling and psychotherapy.

- To advance the education of the public in the part that counselling and psychotherapy can play generally and in particular to meet the needs of those members of society where development and participation is impaired by mental, physical or social handicap or disability.

Standards

In addressing the first organisational objective BAC made clear statements about standards of training and practice. These were manifested in the introduction of systems of accreditation for individual counsellors, counselling supervisors, trainers and training courses. This is particularly important because counselling is an unregulated profession. Therefore, the need to have a standard in place is paramount – and furthers the achievement of both organisational objectives.

The aim of the BAC accreditation scheme for individual counsellors is to identify what constitutes the minimum standard a counsellor should have reached, before being recognised as a safe and accountable independent practitioner in private practice. The completion of a BAC accredited course is one way of meeting the scheme's training requirement.

Having met this requirement, applicants have to provide evidence of 450 hours of supervised practice, over not less than three and not more than five years. They must also show a serious commitment to continuing professional development; be a member of BAC; demonstrate a philosophy of counselling which integrates training, experience, further development and practice; demonstrate practice which adheres to the BAC Code of Ethics and Practice for Counsellors and provide evidence of having completed a minimum of forty hours personal therapy.

National Framework

The issue of standards is high on the political agenda. The government has invested many resources into the development of national occupational standards in a large number of vocational areas, including counselling. BAC representatives have been involved in setting these standards of competence.

Furthermore, a BAC working group is currently undertaking a mapping exercise to relate the BAC accredited course to NVQ levels 3 and 4 in counselling.

Schedule 2a

At present BAC is an Awarding Body for its accredited course and is included in the Department of Education and Employment's (DfEE) Schedule 2a, which is a list of vocational courses in the further education sector that are eligible for funding.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is in the process of incorporating this list, together with all the other funding lists, into a National Qualifications Framework. BAC, along with other awarding bodies, is expected to comply with more stringent quality assurance measures. An investigation, by members of BAC's Courses Accreditation Management Group (CAMG), found that some fairly radical changes need to be made in order to meet the new criteria, particularly the need to introduce a scheme that systematically monitors those institutions offering an accredited course in the further education sector.

Training Programme Accreditation Criteria

The criteria for course accreditation are designed to enable training programmes from different core theoretical models to meet them. The term 'core theoretical model' refers to the theory which underpins the whole course, for example psychodynamic, person-centred or integrative. The scheme achieves this genericism by ensuring that there is a focus on those elements in training which are considered to be fundamental, no matter how varied the rationales underpinning the different courses.

Providers are required to offer a programme that has an appropriate mix among academic, personal development, skills components and client work, consistent with the core theoretical model. The programme must be designed to help students develop as reflective practitioners. Reflective practitioners are defined as:

‘people who are both willing and able to reflect on all aspects of their work as counsellors, learners and as members of the course.’

(BAC 1996 p7)

Providers are also expected to incorporate regular on-going assessment, which enables students to identify and build upon strengths, and to take a developmental approach to difficulties. It is also expected that course staff should be appropriately qualified and competent to cover all elements of the course between them. Programmes are eligible to apply for accreditation after at least one cohort of students has graduated, and the programme has been developed in the light of that experience. They must also offer at least 400 hours of staff/student contact time – which is unlikely to be less than one year full-time, or two to three years part-time.

Nine Basic Elements of Counsellor Training

To achieve accredited status, programmes must be organised so as to fulfil the specified nine basic elements:

Admission

Prospective applicants should be provided with detailed and accurate information about the course, including its structure, aims, staffing, content, assessment requirements, fees and conditions of participation.

Detailed written applications, including referees, are required. Selection should also include some form of interview and selectors should seek evidence that an applicant’s primary need is not for personal therapy or personal growth.

Self Development

Students should be provided with regular opportunities for self-awareness work and should maintain a 'personal record', which monitors it. They should also gain experience of being in the client role.

Client work

Students must have opportunities, consistent with the core theoretical model, for substantial and regular counselling work with 'real clients'. Client work must be as defined by BAC in its documents 'Definition of Terms' and 'Codes of Ethics and Practice' – that is, students' counselling opportunities must involve an explicit counselling agreement rather than the chance to exercise counselling skills within another profession or context.

Supervision

Individual students must have regular and sufficient supervision, with an appropriately qualified and experienced supervisor – being consistent with the core theoretical model.

Skills Training

Programmes should provide regular opportunities to practise the blend of skills appropriate to the core theoretical model and a progressive monitoring and assessment of skills development.

Theory

This should be sufficient to enable students to identify underlying assumptions, basic principles and elements, concepts, strategies and techniques of the core theoretical model. They should also be able to understand the therapeutic process and principles and mechanisms of change in the model. Comparisons with other counselling approaches should be made.

The way the social system affects client development and counselling practice needs to be examined. Social systems include such factors as race, culture, gender, sexuality, politics, religion, ethics and class.

Students are expected to undertake substantial reading and written work to clarify philosophical and theoretical concepts and to show how these integrate with their counselling practice.

Professional Development

Students need to develop an understanding of the work of other professionals in the mental health field. They must also recognise the importance of continuing professional development, including reading and understanding research findings and their application.

Assessment

This should be congruent with the core theoretical model, with emphasis on the assessment of competence in counselling skills and practice undertaken during the course.

Course Evaluation

There should be an ongoing process of evaluation throughout the duration of the course, which includes both staff and students. The evaluation process should also provide for the role of persons external to the course.

The Partnership Stage

Once accreditation is achieved course teams are required to:

‘engage in consultation with another recognised course over a 5 year period.’

(BAC 1996 p27)

The consultation process involves the exchange of course submission documents and panel reports. It is intended that consultation meetings between representatives of the courses involve reviewing CAMG's report on each course, sharing good practice and discussing any course or organisational issues. Course teams are required to meet at least once a year.

Courses are required to submit an Annual Report to BAC on the process of consultation, by 31 January each year. This report document should also include details of changes to the course, ethical problems and other issues or points as currently required by BAC. Any breaches of Codes of Ethics must be disclosed to the partner and be included in the Annual Report.

Accredited courses are expected to keep a written record of partnership consultations and these serve as a basis for partnership contributions to re-accreditation.

Rationale

The letter sent to new participants of the partnership scheme, by representatives of the CAMG, points out that all BAC systems of accreditation are based on peer evaluation, and that asking courses to be responsible for encouraging and monitoring each other's development, and reporting on it, is a development of this.

The scheme is designed to give the opportunity for course teams to visit and share ideas, contents, methods and issues, which can encourage the development and promotion of good standards of training.

BAC highlights that, although it is recognised that yearly meetings may add burdens to already stretched training, they hope course teams will see it as important staff development. Furthermore, they stress that it is essential that course organisers give priority to allocating time for this, as subsequent re-accreditation of the course depends on these regular meetings and reports.

If two course teams find it too difficult to work together, they are advised to report back to CAMG who will help explore the difficulties and, if necessary, suggest alternative partnerships.

Accredited Courses

In March 1998, when this research commenced, thirty-eight courses were actively involved in the partnership scheme. Although these courses are run throughout England, and one course in Scotland, at least one third of them are based in London.

Courses are offered in different types of institution. Twenty-two come from the statutory sector, 15 higher education and 7 further education institutions. Of the remaining institutions, 11 came from the private sector and 5 from the not-for-profit sector. The majority of courses are run on a part-time basis. These are offered during the day, the evening or at weekends. Some courses also include block weeks for students.

The length of time courses have been accredited varies. Some have been involved in the scheme since its inception, ten years ago, and some for only a few months. The number of accredited courses is growing, and the scheme is becoming widely accepted, both inside and outside the profession, as the benchmark for counsellor training.

There are a variety of core theoretical models. Nineteen come from the person-centred tradition, ten from psychodynamic and nine from integrative. Of these courses fourteen were partnered with a course of a similar core theoretical model.

Research

Broad Aims

This research was undertaken at a time when all the accreditation procedures were being examined. The accreditation committee, comprising representatives from

all the accreditation management groups, courses, individual counsellors, trainers and supervisors, was conscious of the fact that the schemes were growing too fast for the assessment of applications to remain with volunteer assessors. There were 120 volunteers being used as assessors, which was problematic both administratively and in terms of quality assurance.

CAMG were concerned with aspects of the partnership scheme, in particular that it comprises the only monitoring of accredited courses over the five-year accreditation period. Other concerns were that a large number of courses repeatedly send their Annual Report forms in late, sometimes up to six months, and that increasingly the demands of courses' own institutions conflict with those of the partnership scheme.

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to investigate the BAC partnership scheme, with a view to ascertaining its effectiveness and to make suggestions for its improvement.

Specific Objectives

In order to meet the broad aims of this research certain objectives had to be met. It was necessary to identify the functions of the partnership scheme, not only from documentary sources but also from the perceptions of the scheme's participants. Ascertaining the effectiveness of each function followed this. The final objective was to investigate the value placed on the scheme, by both the participants and those operating it.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked:

- What are the functions of the partnership scheme?
- Are they effective?
- Is the partnership scheme valued by the accredited courses?
- How can the partnership scheme be improved?

These research questions evolved from the specific objectives. It was felt necessary to examine the functions of the partnership scheme in order to ascertain whether the original purpose matched with participants' expectations and experience. This is particularly significant when considering the scheme's development since its inception. As a follow-up to this question the effectiveness of these functions was addressed. This was deemed essential since without it there would be no base from which to make recommendations for improvement.

The question relating to the value of the scheme by its participants is also important because the scheme's rationale rests on the development and promotion of good standards of training through peer support and evaluation. The final question, which refers to ways in which the scheme can be improved, was necessary because of the imperative to ensure best practice within the course accreditation scheme as a whole.

Summary

The importance of standards at both the local and national level, particularly in the current climate, in which statutory regulation is high on the agenda, has meant that research into this aspect of provision is timely.

The partnership scheme is an integral part of course accreditation and its effectiveness, or otherwise, is an important quality indicator. Results from the research will inform the development of the course accreditation scheme, in particular re-accreditation.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

The findings from the survey and case study research, into the effectiveness of the BAC partnership scheme, will be analysed using established, applicable concepts found in the current literature.

The BAC partnership scheme is unique in its structure. The scheme links course teams as partners, with a view to a relationship developing that is supportive and evaluative, yet fairly informal and flexible.

The literature review comprises those areas that both conceptually and empirically relate to different aspects of the scheme – ‘partnerships’, ‘mentoring’, ‘accountability’ and ‘evaluation’.

The partnership literature gives insight into operationalising different partnerships and determining their effectiveness. This can usefully be applied to the partnership scheme being researched.

The mentoring literature defines the way in which support can be systematically introduced into a relationship. The application of these findings to the BAC scheme will enable a measurement to be made as to its effectiveness.

The accountability and evaluation literature will highlight the conditions necessary for an effective monitoring system, and also indicate whether schemes purporting to be both supportive and monitoring can be effective. The focus on peer evaluation links directly with the partnership scheme.

PARTNERSHIPS

In the education sector partnerships have evolved in a variety of areas and between a number of different providers. Discussions about the partnership concept are varied, depending on the overall view of its nature.

Those in favour of partnerships point to how they exist to support and develop educational provision, for example franchising courses, or access programmes, which are becoming increasingly popular for mature students. Partnership activity is justified because:

‘partners achieve through collaboration what they could never achieve by solitary effort, however industrious.’

(Kirk 1995 p114)

Partnerships can also lead to curriculum improvement. The types of partnerships resulting in this are, for example, those between educational institutions and: teachers, parents, pupils, business and parents associations. Gallacher (1995) realises the importance of these and points out that:

‘only with effective partnerships between the wide range of interests ...will we create an education system with integrity and maximise educational opportunity and quality for our young (and not so young) people.

(Gallacher 1995 p24)

Business and industry partnerships are also useful for preparing young people to take their place in the workplace. By working closely with those from the business sector, those in education can develop enterprise skills (Warwick 1995).

It is also maintained that partnership is an acceptable way to deal with the financial pressures educational institutions face. In an era of demands for greater

efficiency and effectiveness, within a market economy, some institutions are attracted to the option of cost sharing (Kirk 1995).

On the other hand, some argue that collaboration can be used to ‘professionally blackmail’ institutions. It is seen:

‘as a way of engendering a commitment to collaboration that might not otherwise be forthcoming, and, therefore, constitutes a technique of inducing compliance.’

(Kirk 1995 p113)

Further, partnerships can be used in order to mask hidden agendas, such as a larger institution wanting to take over a smaller, weaker one. Or they can be used to patch up weaknesses in provision, instead of making required changes. As Kirk pointed out:

‘In such contexts, partnership may be a form of self-defence by relevant stakeholders, demonstrating timidity in addressing change and ultimately perpetuating the structural incoherence of the educational system.’

(Kirk 1995 p114)

Definition

Irrespective of the view of partnership taken, definitions are fairly consistent. A distinction is made between partnership and participation. Participation involves a contribution to an activity, but it lacks precision, particularly in respect of commitment and responsibility. Although participation can involve a significant amount of action, it can also be limited to just observing.

Members of governing bodies and school boards, for example, are elected to participate, however:

‘the actions involved do not necessarily require mutual obligation by participants.’

(Gallacher 1995 p17)

Partnership, on the other hand, implies a mutual, and more rigorous, series of obligations, as identified by Pugh (1989):

‘A working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.’

(Pugh 1989 p5)

This definition makes reference to a shared sense of purpose. However, as Gallacher (1995) argues, this is of no significance unless the partnership is characterised by a working relationship that successfully works towards achieving its purpose.

Nonetheless, Pugh’s definition is widely quoted in discussions about partnerships. Both Bastiani (1993) and Macbeth (1995) develop it, when they point out that partners need not be similar, as very effective partnerships have involved bringing together different but complementary attributes.

Linked to this, is the question about whether partners should be equal. Macbeth (1995) points out that some suggest partners should be equal, however, others argue that inequality amongst partners is an important characteristic, in respect of parents and teachers, for example. By law, parents are responsible for the education of their child and schools exist to assist. Therefore, the legal status of parents predominates.

Another aspect of the definition to consider is the dynamic nature of partnerships. Their nature and content may alter, involving a mixture of interdependence and autonomy. Macbeth (1995) points out that:

‘There is mutual benefit...for partners to cooperate and influence each others’ actions, but similarly there must be recognition of some independence and of other responsibilities.’

(Macbeth 1995 p51)

Functions

A number of functions are identifiable for institutions engaged in partnership activity. Saunders and Stradling (1991), working towards a generic model of partnership, using their survey of the Technical and Vocational Initiative (TVEI), explore the potential functions available for participants. They suggest the following six:

‘mediation and liaison

co-ordination

control

co-operation

allocation of resources

evaluation’

(Saunders and Stradling 1991 p64)

Their survey indicates that whether these functions are fulfilled in practice, depends on local geographical, political and historical factors. The findings also

indicate that other, more strategic, functions emerge in those areas where partnerships are already fulfilling some of the above functions. These further functions relate more specifically to the way in which partnerships operate in the new environment of an educational market economy:

‘leverage for whole-institutions change

facilitation of institutional self-evaluation

accountability

collective agenda-setting’

(Saunders and Stradling 1991 p65)

Chadwick (1996), when discussing strategy in the further education sector, focuses on the functions of partnerships, believing them to be a positive way to deal with the regulatory aspect of the sector.

He also points out that this allows partners to focus on their own areas of expertise, whilst developing competence in areas of weakness. Furthermore, they are flexible enough to allow the establishment of a relationship most suited to the needs of the partners, in terms of duration and structure. Chadwick does stress, however, that:

‘If the alliance is to work well, both partners must be satisfied that one is not gaining at the expense of the other, that ulterior motives or a hidden agenda are not driving the relationship and that one is not seeking to undermine the other.’

(Chadwick 1996 p15)

Partnership Building

Partnerships vary, depending on the participants, whether they are informal or formal and their anticipated duration. The Further Education Unit (FEU) (1994) points out that the process of establishing a partnership is very much developmental and should be allowed a degree of flexibility in order to accommodate creativity. It adds that:

‘While structures and accountability can and should support effective collaboration, personalities can play a key role...A mismatch of personalities or an insensitive approach can have just as detrimental an effect on a collaborative venture as poor planning and structures.’

(FEU 1994 p5)

As well as considering the personalities involved when establishing a partnership, it is also important to consider the nature of the participants. Partnerships in higher and further education institutions, for example, are becoming more common, in order to meet government targets. However, as Austin and MacManus (1992) point out, it is important not to:

‘underestimate the complexities involved in creating new working partnerships between institutions with different traditions and cultures.’

(Austin and MacManus 1992 p555)

Differences between the two sectors lie not only in their history but also in their whole educational process, status and management (Austin and MacManus 1992). Nevertheless, higher education institutions are increasingly opting to work in partnership with those from further education.

The FEU, conscious of the potential difficulties, offer some guidelines for collaboration, believing that all partnerships, whether formal or informal, should have a clear purpose and set of aims:

‘Before reaching a decision to collaborate, or when reviewing a partnership, the costs and benefits of the proposed arrangement need to be weighed up.

Partnerships make specific management demands because such arrangements are complex and the chain of accountability longer.

Different institutions and agencies may have different approaches to management and different degrees of rigour.

Partnerships should be subject to equally rigorous standards of monitoring and quality assurance as other areas of the organisation’s work.’

(FEU 1994 pp11-12)

Once agreement has been made to establish a partnership, it goes through a series of four development stages, a model Saunders and Stradling (1991) identify:

Mobilisation – this initial stage involves management deciding the basis on which the partnership will operate and how resources will be allocated.

Implementation – this stage encompasses the early experiences of getting the partnership underway.

Institutionalisation – this is the time in which consolidation, review and evaluation replace the former stage of experimentation, change and development.

Self-sustaining continuity – this stage is apparent once the structure, staffing, resources and joint activities are capable of self sustaining, without any input from

outside agencies. The example used by Saunders and Stradling (1991) is funding of TVEI from the Employment Department.

Saunders and Stradling (1991) acknowledge that this is an idealised model and many partnerships may never go beyond the implementation stage. However, they do point out that the model is useful because it highlights the different managerial strategies and skills required at each stage.

Effective Partnerships

For a partnership to be effective it is important for there to be an understanding, on both sides, of the overall aim of the collaboration. This is highlighted by White (1994), in his study of partnerships between teacher education courses and schools, when he states that all participants must be aware of, and accept, everyone's role in the process. He also believes that a structure should be in place to support the process and any negotiations within it.

Gallacher (1995), acknowledging the need for effective partnerships, particularly in times of change, agrees with White, stating that the most successful partnerships:

‘are based on mutual trust and sharing of information, ease of access, co-operation and collaboration. They require...partners...to work together flexibly.’

(Gallacher 1995 p19)

Any partnership agreement, therefore, requires time (for participants to discuss all aspects, evaluate and develop) and resources (in order for a close working relationship to develop).

Chadwick (1996), researching strategy in further education, agrees with this, stating that a partnership needs time, commitment and effort for it to succeed. Furthermore:

‘there should also be a period of transition over which respect and trust can develop and a stronger common identity be established.’

(Chadwick 1996 p15)

The FEU (1994), incorporating the above principles, drew up a series of points, designed to make partnerships more effective. These include:

‘ensure there is no conflict of interest...;

have a very clear objective for the collaboration...;

define, at the outset, what will happen if/when objectives have been achieved;

ensure that the person who collaborates on behalf of the other organisation is empowered to act;

acknowledge the importance of inter-personal skills in conducting collaborative arrangements;

decide who needs to know what and ensure people are kept informed;

be trustworthy;

ensure demonstrable accountability on both sides;

let common sense prevail.’

(FEU 1994 p6)

Saunders and Stradling (1991) also identify characteristics found in an effective partnership. These included a strong commitment, at the level of policy making, to most of the partnership goals; an agenda, set out at the beginning, which incorporates strategic co-operation and collaboration; and an acknowledgement that the institutions involved gain more from being in the partnership than by remaining isolated.

They also highlight the role of the partnership co-ordinator, which they believe is a key determinant of effectiveness. They believe that holders of this role should not only be able to negotiate and mediate, but also to develop an atmosphere of teamwork in order to address the needs of the partnership. Furthermore, this person would also need to keep up-to-date on any initiative, to ensure that the partnership could be both proactive and responsive.

Ineffective Partnerships

Partnerships that are ineffective have some identifiable characteristics. Kirk (1995) points out that:

‘It is typical of... weak partnerships that there is a focus on formal arrangements for collaboration, on the administrative details, rather than the conceptual relationship between different components..’

(Kirk 1995 p116)

It is also the case that the effectiveness of some partnerships can gradually decline. Austin (1991) suggested that staleness, cosiness and a high turnover of staff can be to blame. Leech (1995) also adds that effectiveness may also be reduced by a change in organisational culture, a number of bad experiences or unrealistic expectations.

The FEU (1994) also point out that it is difficult to have a workable partnership if the institutional structures are not comparable. Furthermore, problems can arise if

partners do not share the same values, or are not at the same development stage. That is not to say that partnerships in these circumstances are impossible, but if difference is not acknowledged misunderstandings can arise and working relationships may be affected.

The FEU (1994), therefore, suggest a number of ways to prevent a partnership from being ineffective. Don't:

- ‘assume that collaboration is, of itself, a ‘good thing’;

- impose lengthy formal processes where creativity might be stifled;

- be fettered by roles of formal liaison but don't work against your own institution and alienate anyone;

- underestimate the powerful effect on success or failure exerted by the personalities of the leading figures;

- be negative and lose heart;

- try to continue with a collaborative arrangement in its current form if it is not working.’

(FEU 1994 p6)

The Future of Partnerships

The increasing number of partnerships developing in all areas of education suggests that they will remain, despite the often conflicting types of organisational management structures and culture. Chadwick (1996) points out that, if a regulatory framework is established to monitor the partnership, it should be possible to avoid potential problems and make the most of the benefits.

He further added that:

‘The framework must allow there to be effective management but also be flexible enough to ensure that the nature of the alliance itself can be changed if circumstances demand it.’

(Chadwick 1996 p15)

The FEU (1994), when examining partnerships in the FE sector, was also aware that they are not simple and straightforward, requiring the clarification of relationships, resourcing and contractual obligations. However, they did conclude that:

‘In spite of the competitive climate engendered by the incorporation all the colleges involved in the project acknowledged the benefits of collaboration and could clearly identify what the losses would be if certain forms of collaboration were to cease.’

(FEU 1994 p12)

MENTORING

The Ancient Greeks introduced mentoring as a concept, although the contexts in which it is applied have changed. Rather than being an advisor, whose position evolves from friendship, a mentor is now used in a variety of circumstances, to facilitate development.

These various situations in which mentoring occurs place different demands on the mentor and mentee. Maynard and Furlong (1994), using the example of mentoring trainee teachers, put forward three models of mentoring, in order to capture this diversity:

‘The apprenticeship model, where learning to teach is through emulating the examples of experienced teachers (mentors);

The competency based approach, where the mentor becomes a systematic trainer, coaching the trainee in specified competencies;

The reflective model, where the mentor takes on the role of stimulating critical reflection and becomes a ‘co-enquirer’.

(Maynard and Furlong 1994 p82)

Similarities can be drawn with Parsloe’s (1995) discussion of the three main types of mentoring role. He refers to the ‘mainstream mentor’ who acts as an advisor throughout the various stages of a person’s career; the ‘professional qualification mentor’ who, based on a requirement by a professional association, is allocated to a student in order to help them through their professional qualification; and a ‘vocational qualification mentor’, who helps an NVQ candidate gather and present evidence for their qualification.

Parsloe’s definition rests on his belief that mentoring is:

‘one step removed from direct line management responsibility and is concerned with the longer-term acquisition and application of skills in a developing career by a form of advising and counselling.’

(Parsloe 1995 p73)

Coleman (1997) offers a similar view, when defining mentoring:

‘The notion of a mentor is not necessarily limited to a relatively brief induction process, but may be seen as an ongoing part of professional development.’

(Coleman 1997 p160)

Bush et al (1996), when researching the mentoring of new head teachers, found that within this ongoing development, mentoring is widely viewed as ‘peer support’.

Mentoring Relationship

Whatever definition is adopted, it is widely accepted that most mentoring involves the pairing of a more skilled or experienced person, with someone who is not so skilled or experienced, with a view to developing the less skilled person, in particular, agreed upon, ways (Murray 1991). This pairing can involve a peer or some other appropriate person.

Hankey (1999), in her review of a staff development project, illustrates how peer mentoring can also be an effective way for teachers to assess their practice. She points out that within the review:

‘peer mentoring was to provide a framework for reflective practice constructed through critically evaluative conversations with colleagues in which teachers examine and reflect on their teaching, exploring concepts which underpin the decisions they make when teaching.’
(Hankey 1999 p36)

In their study of how NVQ students are mentored, Jowett and Stead (1994) found that candidates are encouraged to find a mentor in their place of work. Furthermore, it is suggested that training providers should encourage organisations to set up a ‘facilitated mentoring programme’. The concept of a facilitated mentoring programme is put forward by Murray (1991). It involves a structured set of processes that enable an effective mentoring relationship to be created, with a view to developing appropriate behaviour for the participants, from which all will benefit.

This led Jowett and Stead (1994) to identify different models of mentoring. The first model, which is found largely in a business context:

‘has as its central aim the grooming of high-flyers for senior roles – senior executives are paired with selected learners to promote their systematic acquisition of skills.’

(Jowett and Stead 1994 p21)

The second model relates to the induction of new employees:

‘While the learners may later become high-flyers, in this model their status is rather that of fledging.’

(Jowett and Stead 1994 p21)

The third model is about mentoring people from disadvantaged groups:

‘such as members of ethnic minorities, who might otherwise fall by the wayside. Mentoring can, in this context, provide learners with a role model.’

(Jowett and Stead 1994 p21)

However, irrespective of context or adopted model, many researchers believe that the most successful type of mentoring relationship (in terms of learning) is one in which the processes operate two-ways. This argument is put forward by Jones et al (1997), in their research into teachers’ perceptions of mentoring in initial teacher training:

‘Most mentors strongly emphasised that the learning process was a two-way communication, rather than the essentially one-way process implicit in the apprenticeship/pedagogic discourse models.’

(Jones et al pp258-259)

Parsloe (1995) takes this further by stating that unless the balance of personal qualities is right, effective mentoring will not be possible. Establishing the right balance, however, is not easy, because the mentoring relationship is complex, and varied.

Hankey (1999) also points out that for peer mentoring to be successful there must be present:

‘a relationship of mutual trust and esteem.’

(Hankey 1999 p38)

Garvey (1994) puts forward a model of the dimensions contained within such relationships. He described the elements as points on a continuum:

‘open.....closed
public.....private
formal.....informal
active.....passive
stable.....unstable’

(Garvey 1994 p18)

If a relationship is **open** then participants feel free to discuss any topic, whereas if it is **closed** there are only specific agenda items and certain issues are not mentioned.

A **public** relationship involves other people being aware of the relationship and some topics discussed may also be discussed with another party. However, a **private** relationship is one that either no one, or only a few people, are aware of.

Within a **formal** relationship there are agreed appointment times and venues. The content is not necessarily formal, rather the organisation of the meetings are grounded in rules of good conduct. An **informal** relationship is managed on a more casual basis, and works particularly when the participants work in close proximity, enabling them to ‘pop in’ and see one another. As in the case of a formal relationship, this refers to the structure of the meeting and not the content.

An **active** relationship involves both participants taking some sort of action following the mentoring discussions. For example, the mentor intervening on behalf of the mentee, or the mentee undertaking a change in behaviour. A **passive** relationship, on the other hand, produces little action from either side. There may be a lapse in contact between the parties. It is possible to have a mentoring relationship where one party is passive and one active.

A **stable** relationship involves both parties feeling secure, and there being a consistent and regular approach to meetings. Both parties are committed to the relationship and trust one another; an important aspect of this element. An **unstable** relationship is the opposite, both insecure and inconsistent. This

element can produce some negative outcomes; for example, no trust and little commitment.

Garvey (1994) points out that because each mentoring relationship is unique, these elements can be found in a variety of different combinations. He further adds:

‘Time plays a crucial dynamic role in the mentoring process for, as time progresses, the relationship may alter and different dimensions may emerge or come to the fore as a result.’

(Garvey 1994 p19)

Qualities of a Mentor

The mentor’s aim should be to help the mentee recognise their abilities and limitations. It is also important for the mentor to encourage the mentee to seize opportunities and make a realistic appraisal of their career potential (Clutterbuck 1991).

Berkeley (1994) believes that there are certain ‘essential characteristics’ possessed by successful mentors. He modifies an NHS model, and proposes 14 characteristics/roles which reflect this view:

‘A model....

An envisager....

An energizer....

An investor...

A supporter...

A standard-prodder....

A teacher-coach.....

A feedback-giver....

An eye-opener....
A door-opener....
An ideas-bouncer....
A problem-solver....
A career counsellor....
A challenger.'

(Berkeley 1994 pp28 – 29)

It is important, therefore, to provide suitable mentors, with qualities that enable them to undertake the role effectively.

Cox (1997), when discussing mentoring newly qualified teachers, points out that it is important for mentors to be non-judgemental, and to be able to identify and communicate the positive aspects of a new teachers' work.

Parsloe (1995) discusses a report produced by the Council of National Academic Awards (CNAA) and the Government Training Agency, which outlines the personal qualities of a good mentor. The particularly pertinent ones are:

'Good motivators, perceptive, able to support the objectives of the programme and fulfil their responsibilities to the candidate;

high performers, secure in their own position within the organisation and unlikely to feel threatened by, or resentful of, the candidate's opportunities;

able to establish a good and professional relationship, be sympathetic, accessible and knowledgeable about the candidate's area of interest;

sufficiently senior to be in touch with the corporate structure, sharing the company's values and able to give the candidate access to resources and information;

good teachers, able to advise and instruct without interfering...;

good negotiators, willing and able to plan alongside their own management teams and academics.'

(Parsloe 1995 pp71-72)

Training for Mentors

The complexity involved in being an effective mentor raises the issue of training and development. Daresh and Playko (1992) point out that all individuals appointed as mentors need training, even if they have all the characteristics deemed desirable. Sampson and Yeomans (1994), develop this point, when discussing mentors in primary schools,

'There is a need for training which can build skills, knowledge and qualities that are additional to those needed for an effective teacher, but which may enhance teacher effectiveness.'

(Sampson and Yeomans 1994 p207)

Little (1995), conscious of the need for training and development of mentors, debates the question of whether mentoring, and hence mentoring training, is generic or context specific. She believes that mentoring in the workplace, involving reliance on the mentor's professional judgement and technical expertise, is context specific.

However, as the student becomes more self-directed in their own learning, they may prefer to have a mentor who helps them work more autonomously and values new innovative approaches.

Little is clear that these considerations need to inform mentor training. She discusses the Leeds Metropolitan University pilot mentor training programme, which is based on the generic model, and points out that:

‘in areas where the context of professional practice is rapidly changing (for example, the current developments in the health care system) and increasingly complex levels of theoretical debate and analysis are expected to occur, there is surely a need for an ongoing context-specific development of mentors....’

(Little 1995 p20)

Whether generic or context specific, some form of training is nevertheless desirable, even if it is minimal. Little (1995) suggests that it could comprise an initial meeting, at which a basic description of the role is discussed and a guide for mentoring given to the participants. She also suggests that there should be at least one follow-up meeting.

Coleman (1997) supports this view in her discussion of mentoring in initial teacher education (ITE). She further identifies the area of interpersonal skills training as being perhaps the most important in initial teacher education.

Brooks (1996) verifies this view, in a survey of secondary school mentors, when she found that the need for good interpersonal skills is paramount, even when the mentor is subject specific.

It is clear, therefore, as Little (1995) argues, that the issue of training and developing mentors is not straightforward and needs careful consideration

Group Mentoring

Mentoring does not have to be undertaken on a one-to-one basis. Group mentoring can be just as effective, in terms of encouraging personal and professional development.

Wiseman (1997) discusses the power of the mentoring process within a group whose goal is to mentor and support. She views group mentorship as reflecting those traditional mentor relationships in which there is sharing of information, experiences and skills. However, when these events take place in a group setting, they manifest themselves in different ways:

‘Expertise is shared through the group processes. Instead of one experienced faculty member being ‘the mentor’, the entire group forms a mentoring atmosphere, with each member of the group shouldering the responsibility for support at different times and all members of the group learning from each other.’

(Wiseman 1997 p198)

An important aspect of all mentoring relationships is trust. This is paramount in a group mentoring process. Wiseman explains how this developed in the groups she researched:

‘Trust is developed by accepting all ideas as valuable and honouring the space and time of each group member. The foundation of the trust is nurturing and caring for each other. Trust is also knowing that what is said will not be repeated without the proper context.’

(Wiseman 1997 p199)

The Benefits of Mentoring

A successful mentoring relationship does not happen by chance; it involves detailed consideration of a number of issues. Brady (1993), reporting on a study conducted in 1991 on the methods preferred by principals for their own professional development, points out that a successful approach depends upon finding a suitable pairing. To do this, consideration must be given to individual needs, which will be determined by a number of interacting factors, such as institution type, experience, knowledge and ability to take on board new ideas.

In Brady's (1993) study the principals engage in mentoring, reciprocal mentoring and intervisitation. There were perceived benefits from all three processes. The principals claim to have gained new skills and knowledge and are now able to overcome feelings of isolation.

Bolam et al (1995) support these findings in their research into mentoring of new headteachers. They found that the benefits are:

‘the opportunity to talk through problems;

being able to reflect on what it means to be a headteacher

reducing the sense of isolation;

obtaining another perspective;

improving self-confidence.’

(Bolam et al 1995 p37)

Bush et al (1996), whilst supporting these findings, also highlight the potential benefits for the institution. They point out how, after the initial mentoring period, which relates to personal qualities and issues relating to being a new head teacher, it is possible to recognise the effect the mentoring relationship has on school

management. Bush et al (1996) illustrate this with a comment made by a new head, about their mentor:

‘Directly and indirectly he has had an impact on decisions made within the school. I had to be comfortable they were my decisions even though they were a product of joint discussion.’

(Bush et al p137)

Garvey (1995) supports the above findings, in his study of a health service mentoring scheme. He also feels that being part of a mentoring programme enables mentees to learn faster, to cope with change more effectively and encourages them to be more realistic and mature in their attitude.

He also discusses the benefits gained by mentors:

‘Furthermore the acknowledged benefits to the mentor of satisfaction at seeing someone else grow, and personal learning for the mentor, may offer some evidence of the mutually enhancing nature of the mentor relationship.’

(Garvey 1995 p16)

Potential Difficulties of Mentoring

The difficulties that can arise in a mentoring situation tend to be either institutional or interpersonal.

Institutional

Coleman (1997), when reporting on the mentoring of newly qualified teachers, points out that senior management needs to recognise the time commitment involved in mentoring. She further adds that:

‘The lack of time officially afforded to mentoring and the inconsistent practice revealed by the research may indicate that.... mentoring processes may be somewhat superficial and not fully embedded in professional development practice.’

(Coleman 1997 p164)

Little (1995), in her examination of higher education programmes with work place links, also found inconsistencies in practice, even when mentoring is an integral part of the educative programme.

A further institutional difficulty is linked to training. Kram and Bragar (1991) argue that it is better not to introduce a mentoring programme, than to implement one that costs very little and prepares or informs participants inadequately.

Gay (1994) echoes this when pointing out that three of the most common problems in planned mentoring programmes are: assuming anyone has the ability to mentor; not enough suitably qualified mentors; participants who are not sufficiently prepared. He adds that it is easy for people to believe they will make a good mentor, because they have been asked to be one, and that their job is to act as a role model. However:

‘mentoring is about the development of autonomous individuals; it is not about cloning.’

(Gay 1994 p5)

Gay and Stephenson (1998) also point out that in instances where the role of mentor is included in the role of 'supervisor of practice', for example student nursing, then this:

'may be at odds with their responsibility to be the assessor of performance.'

(Gay and Stephenson 1998 p49)

Interpersonal

There is a potential difficulty in relation to the compatibility of the two roles of mentor and manager. As Jowett and Stead (1994) argue:

'Conceptually, they are distinct: a mentor's priority is the development of the learner, while a manager's basic responsibility is to the work....Nevertheless, discipline and monitoring remain substantive responsibilities of managers and, at the same time, a central element of the mentor/learner relationship is trust.'

(Jowett and Stead 1994 p24)

It is possible, therefore, to conceive of potential role conflict for a mentor.

Other difficulties presenting themselves to mentors, are highlighted by Garvey (1995), in his research into a health service mentor scheme. 45 percent of those surveyed find pressure of time a serious problem, 18 percent find dislocation (moving job) a serious problem, 36 percent find achieving a focus for the relationship a mild problem.

This can be compared with the mentees, who experience the problems differently. 20 percent find time pressure a mild problem, 27 percent find dislocation a serious problem, and 27 percent find achieving a focus for the relationship a serious

problem. 20 percent find misunderstandings or resentment of other people outside the relationship a mild problem, which is something mentors did not highlight.

Garvey (1995) responds to the above by stressing the importance of developing a culture which incorporates mentoring into senior management activity. He believes that this will reduce the pressure of time, which is something that does not facilitate learning.

Other interpersonal difficulties relate directly to the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Coleman (1997) points to the potential problems that can arise when the mentor is a senior member of staff, who is unapproachable.

Berkeley (1995) examines the suitability of mentors generally, within the mentoring relationship, and concludes that:

‘An inappropriate mentor, unable or unwilling to satisfy the expectations and needs.....is infinitely worse than no mentor at all.’

(Berkeley 1995 p30)

Mentoring and Learning

Mentoring as a staff development tool is becoming increasingly popular, in both private and public sector organisations. It is used to facilitate the learning of new and talented employees, enabling them to develop their potential. It is important, therefore, that all aspects of the process, design, implementation, selection of mentor, training and review, are afforded the appropriate consideration. Berkeley (1994) makes this point:

‘If we can provide the right people, with the right skills, to undertake a role which everyone concerned understands and values, we will have genuinely enhanced the learning process.’

(Berkeley 1994 p31)

ACCOUNTABILITY

The application of accountability tools has increased greatly in the field of education, particularly since the recent legislative changes across the sector, which include incorporation of further education colleges, grant maintained schools and local management of schools.

Definition

Accountability as a concept has been defined in different ways, enabling consideration of its different components: personal, political, financial, legal, contractual or professional.

A generic, and useful, definition of accountability is put forward by Kogan. He states that accountability is:

‘a condition in which individual role holders are liable to review and the application of sanctions if their actions fail to satisfy those with whom they are in an accountability relationship.’

(Kogan 1986 p25)

The potential sanctions, to which he refers, range in severity from pay and promotion to disapproval.

This view is considered quite narrow and contrasts with other theorists whose:

‘definitions are broad enough to entail assumptions about the consequences of endorsing or rejecting different kinds of relationships.’

(Kogan 1986 p25)

Becher and Eraut (1979), who suggest that a person is accountable to all those people who have placed their trust in them, favour the latter definition and believe that accountability should be expressed in such a way as to ensure that trust is continually renewed.

A further definition is put forward by Sockett (1980). He argues that the definition of accountability can be examined at two levels. At an elementary level, it is possible to say that accountability means simply to hold someone to account.

However, he advocates the development of this definition to include the concept of obligation:

‘To say that an agent is accountable for his actions to another is not merely to say that he is *able* to deliver an ACCOUNT, but to assert that he is *obliged* to do so.’

(Sockett et al 1980 p10)

Barton et al (1980) discuss the concept of obligation in accountability when they examine the ways in which schools and Local Education Authorities operate. They point out that accountability is not just negative, and that it should not be viewed as a burden. Rather, they see accountability as a two-way process and argue that when a Local Education Authority is meeting its external obligations, in order to maintain education standards, it must be supportive in its relationships with schools, and view itself as answerable to them.

Whichever definition is adopted, accountability involves legitimacy, in terms of being accountable to those who have a ‘right’ to know, sanctions and obligations. It also involves a process of negotiation and, in many instances, compromise. This is illustrated by Sockett, who argued that:

‘Accountability is a procedure for reconciling the teaching profession’s right to make decisions with the public’s right to exert some rational influence on the decisions made.’

(Sockett 1980 p75)

Facets of Accountability

The above definitions clearly indicate that accountability as a concept is interpreted differently by different groups and can, therefore, be viewed as a social construct. However, researchers who attempt a conceptual analysis of accountability present very similar findings.

The East Sussex Accountability Project (1979) distinguish three facets of accountability:

- ‘1. *answerability* to one’s clients i.e. pupils and parents (moral accountability).
2. *responsibility* to oneself and one’s colleagues (professional accountability).
3. *accountability* in the strict sense to one’s employers or political matters (contractual accountability).’

(East Sussex Accountability Project 1979 p97)

Accountability, within these three facets, has to meet two demands. Firstly, to maintain existing standards of performance and, if possible, improve them. Secondly to identify areas of weakness, using problem solving methods, and make them better.

This led Barton et al (1980) to argue that it is possible to distinguish six different modes of accountability:

- ‘1. Answerability for maintenance
2. Answerability for problem-solving
3. Responsibility for maintenance
4. Responsibility for problem-solving
5. Strict accountability for maintenance
6. Strict accountability for problem-solving.’

(Barton et al 1980 p111)

These modes can place many demands on educational institutions. In terms of answerability to parents, for example, and the maintenance of standards, this could involve communication and access to teachers etc. Problem solving in relation to parents might involve early disclosure of problems, or telling parents the appropriate channels for complaints.

These different facets of accountability can also result in conflict, both within and between them. An educational institution’s clients vary and often have conflicting interests, for example both parents and children are clients, yet, in terms of answerability, have different requirements; parents might require strict standards of discipline, whereas children may be more concerned with consistency of approach between teachers (Elliott 1979).

Conflict between the facets is also apparent. Professional accountability may not always be in line with contractual accountability. Increasingly administrative tasks are placed on teachers, giving them, as they perceive it, less time to teach in the way they would like and thereby compromising their professionalism.

Mitchell (1995) discusses this point in relation to the Education Reform Act 1988. He puts forward the argument that:

‘The tendency to impose more detailed accountability structures by those representing the outside community carries a risk of not merely damaging the effectiveness of teachers as educators but also of eroding the very outcomes, particularly a skilled, productive workforce, which government itself currently desires.’

(Mitchell 1995 p87)

Debate has focused on whether the school or teacher is accountable. Sockett (1980) and Elliott (1979) give alternative views. Sockett (1980) suggests that it is teachers who should be viewed as accountable, to all stakeholders, irrespective of whether the teachers accept their legitimacy. Elliott (1979), on the other hand, argues that the school is more important, although he does point out that it is a complex situation:

‘In an ideal situation one might argue that a school is accountable to all those groups and agencies who have either a legal or moral right to know about and influence its work. But within any given political context the answers are not so simple.’

(Elliott 1979 p69)

Socket (1980) also considers what a teacher is accountable for, and is quite clear that it should be for outcomes, and the process leading up to them. This is because, in his view, teachers can only be accountable for issues within their control.

Alternative Concepts

Some theorists argue that responsibility and responsiveness have similar characteristics to accountability, when applied to educational institutions. However, whether this is a correct assumption or not depends, in part, upon the definition of accountability.

Responsiveness

Narrow definitions, such as those put forward by Kogan (1986) and Scott (1989), point to differences between the concepts. As Scott (1989) highlights, responsiveness is undertaken freely, whereas accountability is imposed from external agencies. His view stems from his definition of the two concepts:

‘Responsiveness describes the willingness of an institution – or, indeed, an individual – to respond on its or their own initiative. Accountability, in contrast describes the submission of the institution or individual to a form of external audit, its capacity to account for its or their own performance.’

(Scott 1989 p17)

Although Scott views them as separate concepts, he still believes that, within the context of education, they ought to be discussed together, because it is unusual to find an educational institution that isn’t both responsive and accountable. He put forward a model, to discuss these concepts. The first two relate more specifically to accountability and the second to responsiveness.

Political Accountability

Scott (1989) points out that educational institutions operating within a democracy are accountable to the government in two ways. Firstly, they are accountable for the management of the public funds they are allocated. Secondly, the government determines the broad educational structure within the country and the part each educational institution plays in their ‘vision’.

Market Accountability

Within this model of accountability emphasis is on the role of the customer. Scott (1989) argues that if the customer can be placed in a direct relationship with the supplier then it is possible for a self-regulating market to be in place. Scott does,

however, acknowledge that when assessing this view it is important to consider who the customer is.

He adds that, firstly, the education market is not free, rather it is managed, and, secondly, it is not possible to align external benefits, achieved by society from education, to specific individuals.

Professional Responsibility

This can be viewed as an alternative to market accountability. Although Scott realises that teachers, doctors, engineers or the institutions which educate them should be accountable to those they service, he does point out that:

‘It may be that this essential accountability is best captured within a web of professional obligations...they embody codes of practice and sets of values that are all the more influential because they are self-imposed.’

(Scott 1989 p19)

Scott (1989) believes that professionals are responsive to the needs of students within their institutions and this makes the professional model very useful. He also adds that it means that accountability can be applied away from politics and the market economy.

Cultural Responsibility

Scott’s definition of this is:

‘the allegiance to rationality, truth and knowledge, which all those engaged in education must accept.’

(Scott 1989 p20)

Any real change in education, therefore, will come from new insights, knowledge and understanding. An institution, or individual, which does not take on board these things is seen to be unresponsive.

Responsibility

Kogan (1986) highlights the difference between responsibility and accountability. He regards responsibility as predisposing appropriate behaviour based on a moral sense of duty. This contrasts with accountability, because there is no legal or contractual requirement aligned to the concept of responsibility.

Other writers take a broader view of the connection between the two concepts. Elliott (1980) points out that:

‘to be accountable is to be answerable, and one cannot be answerable unless one is responsible for one’s actions.’

(Elliott 1980 p76)

For Elliott, responsibility implies that a person is able to act autonomously. If teachers were not in that position then Elliott believes there would be no point in making them answerable:

‘It is because teachers, as professionals, have certain freedoms to take decisions on matters of curriculum and teaching that they can be answerable to the public for them.’

(Elliott 1980 p77)

Elliott also believes that responsibility involves a person being open to other people’s influence, if a rational case for changing aspects of behaviour is presented. He links this to accountability, arguing that if people are made accountable they will review their activities, using the outcome to modify what they do.

Edwards (1991) also discusses the issue of autonomy. He argues that there can be a degree of conflict for teachers, who have to balance the demands of being autonomous and yet accountable.

The various conceptual discussions on the differences between accountability, responsibility and responsiveness all have some validity. However, some researchers argue that it may be more beneficial to view these concepts as different facets of accountability because, as Bush (1994) points out, most accountability models incorporate responsiveness and responsibility, they are not treated separately.

Three Models of Accountability

It is possible to identify three models of accountability in the literature - market, professional and public. One of the most influential proponents of these models, Kogan (1986), formulates his approach from a normative standpoint, which he describes as:

‘potential relationships and their consequences...whether or not they actually exist in the empirically observable world.’

(Kogan 1986 p38)

Market

There is a lot of discussion about accountability in market terms. This model takes account of free market principles and places the consumer at the centre, although some researchers argue that centring on the relationship between the teacher and the consumer, neglects others (Petch 1992).

Kogan (1986) identifies two consumerist models: ‘partnership’ and ‘free market’.

Partnership

Kogan draws on the work of Sallis (1979) when discussing this aspect of the consumerist model. Sallis (1979) puts forward the idea that parents, as clients of the educational institution, should work in partnership with teachers and not be in a subordinate relationship. She believes that this partnership should be made up of three elements: consensus about objectives; an exchange of information about methods; dialogue about the success of what has been done.

When relating this partnership to accountability Sallis (1988) argues that:

‘true accountability can only exist in an acceptance of shared responsibility for success at the level of the child, the school and the service.’

(Sallis 1988 p10)

Critics of this model accuse it of being idealistic and normative, as it is based on Sallis’ own interpretation of what constitutes good practice, and is possibly the least appropriate model for today’s educational institutions (Bush 1994).

Free Market

Kogan uses the American system to illustrate his view of accountability within a free market context. He points to voucher schemes operating in America, which are:

‘designed to put pressure upon schools through market style mechanisms rather than through publicly maintained systems of control.’

(Kogan 1986 pp51-52)

Kogan (1986) points out that the majority of these voucher schemes do not operate on free market principles, rather they are a 'social market'.

At the time when Kogan was writing about free market accountability, his views were not so applicable to Britain. However, the Education Reform Act 1988 incorporates many free market principles into it.

The Act introduces local management of schools, which tie funding and recruitment together, and schools are allowed to compete for pupils. This changes the whole concept of accountability, as Bush et al (1993) point out:

'the main accountability of the (locally managed) schools is to the market-place and their effectiveness is increasingly assessed by their ability to recruit pupils and to perform well in public examinations.'

(Bush et al 1993 p178)

This was the intention of government, when implementing the Act, for as Coopers and Lybrand (1988) point out, in their report on the local management of schools, the Act is designed to:

'promote accountability and responsiveness of schools and their Local Education Authorities to their consumers.'

(Coopers and Lybrand 1988 p5)

Petch (1992) criticises the market approach, because there is little evidence to suggest that it improves the quality of relationships, or the product. In fact Petch believes that:

‘Market accountability tends to be marked by confrontation rather than co-operation. Suppliers and consumers see themselves as separate groups and seldom co-operate to achieve a common end. There tends to be an emphasis on consumer rights, rather than consumer obligations.’

(Petch 1992 p91)

Bush (1994) also criticises the market model, developing Kogan’s (1986) view of the damage it may cause to teacher’s professionalism. He points out that the emphasis put on market principles by the government, reduces:

‘the producer ‘domination’ of the education system and, by implication, the significance of professional accountability.’

(Bush 1994 p319)

Professional

The focus of this model of accountability is professional peer assessment. Teachers are assessed by their colleagues in terms of how their work conforms to professional values and norms.

Mitchell (1995) argues that one reason for advocating a professional model of accountability is to address:

‘the specific matter of how teachers as professionals can legitimately expect to be permitted to conduct themselves.’

(Mitchell 1995 pp99-100)

He acknowledges that agencies external to the institution are entitled to be made aware of how educationalists discharge their responsibilities, however, he does point out that:

‘a clear distinction must be made between matters of explanation and justification on the one hand and intrusion into the professional domain on the other.’

(Mitchell 1995 p102)

Other writers have put forward a case for professional accountability. Elliott et al (1979) argue that professional accountability can be applied to schools, if they are required to illustrate to teachers that their educational aims are to protect and develop educational values.

Sockett (1980) develops this model further, attributing to it the following characteristics:

- ‘(a) accountability would be *for* adherence to principles of practice rather than *for* results embodied in pupil performances,
- (b) accountability would be rendered *to* diverse constituencies rather than *to* the agglomerate constituency of the public alone,
- (c) the teacher would have to be regarded as an autonomous professional, not as a social technician, with the bureaucratic framework of a school and the educational system,
- (d) the evaluation through measurement of pupil performances (the ‘how’ of accountability) would be replaced by a conception of evaluation as providing information for constituents allied to a system of proper redress through a professional body.’

(Sockett 1980 p19)

Sockett justifies this system by considering the following three inter-related points. Firstly, he acknowledges that teachers have an influence over children and are, therefore, responsible, in part, for their successes and failures. However:

‘the mere testing of results assumes that a teacher has greater control than is possible.’

(Sockett 1980 p19)

Secondly, if accountability only focuses on results, it ignores the quality of learning and the learning environment. Thirdly, if the aim of accountability is to improve the teaching quality, in order to improve results, then attention should be placed on the teaching:

‘If therefore the profession was able to articulate what it regarded as the positive standards of good teaching it would itself be providing a measure of accountability.’

(Sockett 1980 p20)

This view is criticised for being too inward looking, concentrating on the ‘producer’ rather than the ‘customer’. However, its legitimacy increases if it is considered in conjunction with the public accountability model and Kogan’s two consumerist models (Bush 1994).

Public

Perhaps the most dominant form of accountability in Britain at present, this model refers to the way in which institutions are accountable to those who sponsor and fund education. Managerial hierarchy is its main characteristic. Teachers are accountable to the head teacher for their own work, and the head teacher is accountable for the work of the school as a whole.

Kogan develops this analysis further by pointing out that:

‘Unlike the accountability of professionals to each other, the managerially accountable school within a local authority is legitimated by the electoral process. That may mean, however, that it is tied into the political-administrative system of the local authority and less capable of being influenced by its immediate clientele.’

(Kogan 1986 p40)

The advent of grant maintained (now foundation) schools, and the incorporation of colleges, has meant that this argument has lost some of its credibility. Accountability to governing bodies is now the focus of public accountability for many institutions.

Ball et al (1997), however, identify three models in relation to Local Education Authority accountability, the first of which parallels the model of public accountability for educational institutions. This model prioritises community needs and local political goals. Ball et al (1997) explain this as follows:

‘In the case of model one, attempts are made to relate service provision to community needs and interests. Here relationships with school and with parents/students are separated out. Equal access is a key criterion of system performance. The LEA sets social and educational priorities and works with schools to achieve these.’

(Ball et al 1997 p155)

EVALUATION

Nature and Purpose

Nature

West-Burnham defines evaluation as:

‘an internal or external formative process designed to provide feedback on the total impact and value of a project or activity.’

(West-Burnham 1994 p158)

Evaluation involves the participants making judgements about activities, using a set of predetermined criteria, with a view to informing decision making in the institution.

‘It needs to be seen as an integral part of the management process... It must be a continuous subject of attention and must be soundly embedded in the structure and culture of the organisation.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p14)

Evaluation is more than just monitoring. Monitoring involves systematic checking and tracking to ensure compliance with policy (Robson 1993).

Evaluation, however, develops this, by:

‘making judgements about the worth of an activity through systematically and openly collecting and analysing information ...and relating this to explicit objectives, criteria and values.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p2)

The type of evaluation an institution adopts will depend on its purpose. Formative evaluation is often used when the evaluation is done internally, as part of curriculum development; whereas summative evaluation may be linked to external evaluation; for example, inspection.

Clemmett and Pearce (1986) identify the dimensions of evaluation, placing summative outcomes with external evaluation at one end of the spectrum and formative ‘process-oriented’ evaluation at the other:

Objectives Approach	Process Approach
/-----/	
Summative	Formative
External	Internal
Formal	Informal
Generalisation	Case Particular
Product	Process
Judgmental	Descriptive
Pre-Ordinate	Responsive
Analytical	Holistic
/-----/	

(Clemmett & Pearce 1986 p36)

This representation clearly illustrates the intricate nature of evaluation, and the fact that it is a:

‘multi-faceted phenomenon, encompassing a range of diverse properties.’

(Hamilton 1976 p11)

Although evaluations vary in type, there are some common elements, depending on whether they are internal or external.

Internal

This type of evaluation is an integral part of the process of curriculum development. To be effective, an institution should incorporate it into its quality assurance systems. Kelly (1992) identifies three dimensions of internal curriculum evaluation:

- Analysis of the cost and effectiveness of the curriculum, in relation to the goals and principles on which it is based.

‘Whether the curriculum is good in itself, rather than merely being delivered effectively.’

(Kelly 1992 p189)

- Taking account of when the evaluation occurs, whether it is ongoing throughout the course, or whether it takes place at the end. This will affect the responses made to the evaluation. If it is done in an ongoing way then difficulties can be addressed, and rectified (if possible) immediately. If evaluation takes place at the end of a course then any difficulties cannot be rectified for that cohort, although the next cohort should benefit.
- Distinguishing between formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is about the process, whereas summative is the product.

It is possible to carry out internal evaluation, at either the institutional, departmental or individual level, in a number of ways. However, its effectiveness depends on full integration of the evaluation system into the institutional culture and curriculum development (Clift et al 1987).

Clift et al (1987) examine 200 self-evaluation activities, and produce a tentative typology, which identifies a link between successfully incorporated evaluation and management style. Where senior or middle management initiates evaluation,

and its purpose is accountability, a rational style of management, it is less likely to be integrated.

A collegial style of management, which endorses the initiation of evaluation from any status level, in order to promote professional and curriculum development, is more likely to be fully incorporated and effective.

External

External evaluation is linked with accountability, and is influential in determining institutional decisions. As Preedy (1989) points out:

‘external constraints and accountability demands play a large part in shaping curriculum decisions within the school or college.’

(Preedy 1989: 10)

Rather than being part of quality assurance processes, the concern of external evaluation, as carried out by Ofsted and the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), is quality control and correction.

Although the aim of external evaluation is to improve the standards of education, the reports do not encourage institutions to feel ownership of them (Lofthouse et al 1995). This has an effect on how readily the recommendations are accepted and acted upon.

FEFC inspection is different from Ofsted, in that the former works more closely with the institution to establish an inspection programme. However, the results from both types are available for public scrutiny and can affect institutional development.

Purpose

The purpose of effective evaluation, as Clemmett and Pearce (1986) point out, is:

‘To illuminate, clarify and then improve the quality of education by promoting changes in the way people view the processes at work.’

(Clemmett & Pearce 1986 p39)

Nixon (1992) argues that evaluation is necessary, in order to create a context of shared understanding. This will enable institutions to be aware of when change is needed. He also believes that it facilitates improvement in classroom practice and the wider institutional structures. He made these points quite succinctly, when he wrote:

‘The prime purpose of evaluation is the creation of a context of ideas within which critical self reflection is seen as a prerequisite both of improved practice and of genuine accountability.’

(Nixon 1992 p35)

Furthermore, evaluation that links with strategic planning, in terms of addressing the vision, goals and institutional needs, illustrates that it is a process, rather than a static and summative event.

It is also important to note that, as House (1983) points out, evaluation:

‘is not the ultimate arbiter, delivered from our objectivity and accepted as the final judgement.’

(House 1983 p1)

Interested parties may use evaluation in order to defend something or to implement a change. Furthermore, the way in which evaluation findings are

accepted will depend on whether they help or hinder the person receiving them. This illustrates the political aspect of evaluation. As House (1983) argues:

‘Evaluation is an integral part of the political process of our society.’

(House 1983 p1)

Aspinwall et al (1992) develop this when they note that evaluation is a value-laden, political process, in which individuals decide what is to be evaluated and by whom. They further note that although one purpose of evaluation is to make judgements about the value of an activity, using clear standards and criteria, this might cause problems because of disagreement about what constitutes appropriate criteria.

Quality

The purposes of evaluation, as outlined above, relate to the concept of quality. One of the features of an effective quality system is:

‘periodic review of the system to ensure it meets changing requirements.’

(Munro-Faure and Munro-Faure 1992 p7)

This ‘periodic review’, or evaluation, promotes the maintenance and development of standards within an institutional framework. Colleges in the further education sector illustrate this, as they are subject to regular inspections, that include reviewing of quality standards and regular reports containing evaluative feedback from stakeholders (FEFC 1993).

Evaluation and Accountability

There are close links between evaluation and the three models of accountability – market, professional and public. Where accountability is to the market, or the public, then evaluation of the curriculum often comes as a result of demands from groups external to the institution. These demands are often applied with some degree of pressure and require the institution to:

‘provide objective evidence of performance’

(Lofthouse et al 1994 p43)

Results from these evaluations are often linked to funding, for example FEFC inspection. However, in respect of professional accountability:

‘The impetus to evaluate the curriculum for the purpose of improving teaching and learning may come from within the institution or the profession.’

(Lofthouse et al 1994 p44)

Teachers may be more committed to evaluation that is linked to professional accountability than the other two types because, as McCormick and James point out:

‘they have accepted a commitment to the maintenance and improvement of their practice.’

(McCormick and James 1983 p26)

Undertaking Evaluation

Any system of evaluation, whatever the general strategy is, will require the use of particular techniques. Techniques vary, depending upon whether the evaluation is internal or external; what is to be investigated; availability of resources and how integrated into the institutional culture it is.

Whatever technique is used, evaluation tends to fall into four distinct phases:

- Planning, setting up and focusing
- Gathering evidence
- Analysis and dissemination
- Utilization

(Nixon 1992 p37)

These four stages are closely linked, and as Aspinwall et al (1992) point out:

‘Management of evaluation is a process. All stages need thinking through and managed in an integrated way.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p15)

Nixon (1992) develops this argument further when he points out that it is important to understand the long-term nature of the evaluative process:

‘if it is to have any real impact on teaching and learning, and the way in which these are perceived within the wider community.’

(Nixon 1992 p35)

Rolph & Rolph (1989) illustrate these four phases of evaluation in practice. They develop an evaluation process, based on personal construct theory, in order to

address the legislative requirements Higher Education institutions were facing, which put:

‘growing pressure on them to clarify and establish their processes of monitoring and enhancing standards.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p117)

Their findings are discussed as they relate to each of Nixon’s (1992) four phases:

Planning, Setting Up and Focusing

Planning is of paramount importance if an evaluation is to be effective. Harlen & Elliott (1982) provide a checklist for planning an evaluation. Institutions must be clear about:

- Reasons for evaluating
- Purposes and motivations
- Whether it’s worthwhile
- Interpretation of the evaluation task
- Subjects of the evaluation
- Evaluation methods
- Time schedule
- Control of information
- Criteria for making judgements or decisions
- Reporting

(Harlen & Elliott 1982 pp296-8)

The context in which the evaluation is to take place must also be considered when planning and setting it up. As Nixon (1992) points out:

‘only within a trusting and sympathetic context, in which participants have neither forgotten how to be curious nor are afraid to ask questions, can evaluation be a means of self knowledge. Such contexts don’t come ready-made. They have to be constructed, sometimes at the expense of much time and effort.’

(Nixon 1992 p115)

Linked with the above is the need to schedule the evaluation appropriately. Sufficient time must be allocated to it and the schedule must take account of other commitments.

An appropriate schedule will be easier to implement if there is a clear focus to the evaluation. Activities must be prioritised and there needs to be coherence between individuals, teams and the institution as a whole (Aspinwall et al 1992).

Critical Factors

This initial stage is of paramount importance if an evaluation is to be implemented successfully. If, for example, staff are not consulted at this stage, there is danger of tension and a rejection of the evaluation. As Nixon (1992) points out:

‘It is important to get it (evaluation) right and getting it right means taking the need for initial consultation seriously.’

(Nixon 1992 p47)

Problems can also arise if the evaluation lacks a specific focus. This can lead to a lot of wasted time in gathering:

‘either too much evidence or evidence which, in retrospect, proves to be inappropriate.’

(Nixon 1992 p43)

At this stage it is also essential for the process not to be rushed. If insufficient time is allocated to planning and scheduling, important aspects can be overlooked.

Nixon (1992) sums up the above in his statement that:

‘the build up to the evaluation should be careful, meticulous and unrushed and should include a full review of the literature available, and involve the whole staff.

(Nixon 1992 p44)

Practical Application

When planning their evaluation, the Rolphs examined the various approaches available to them, deciding to take the illuminative approach, which:

‘should not be thought of as a form of evaluation in itself, but as a holistic approach encapsulating a range of quantitative and qualitative methods.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p119)

This led them to the work of Schwab (1970), whose work on deliberation influenced them, when designing the system. Schwab believes that there are five constituencies, which must be represented in any group tackling a curriculum problem. These constituencies comprise familiarity with the subject matter, the students, the context, curriculum development and someone representing the lecturers.

Gather Evidence

There are a number of techniques available to evaluators, for gathering evidence. Choice of technique will depend upon the evaluation questions being asked and the audience for whom it is intended. Robson (1993) highlights this when he wrote that:

‘what is particularly important is the usefulness of the data for the purposes of the evaluation, and not the method by which it is obtained.’

(Robson 1993 p185)

Decisions regarding which evaluation questions to ask, need to take account of the constraints the institution is under, particularly resources and time, and this, in turn, will determine choice of method.

As with other types of research, methods available can be either quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative methods, such as: questionnaires, statistical analysis and structured interviews, are easy to analyse and present. Qualitative methods, such as: participant observation and unstructured interviews, are more difficult to analyse systematically, but they do give a more detailed and insightful account of the phenomenon.

Patton (1987) illustrates the above, pointing out that:

‘Quantitative measures are succinct, parsimonious and easily aggregated for analysis;...By contrast, qualitative responses are longer, more detailed, and variable in content; analysis is difficult because responses are neither systematic nor standardised. Yet the open-ended response permits one to understand the world as seen by the respondent.’

(Patton 1987 p11)

A combination of methods is often used, triangulation, in order gain an all round understanding of the issues. Nixon (1992), when evaluating pupil achievement, not only looks at the outcomes (exam results), but also uses a more qualitative approach when addressing such issues as: interaction between pupils, the extent to which they controlled their own learning, how much learning took place outside of school and reports to parents.

Whatever method, or combination of methods, is chosen, the evaluator needs to ensure that there is sufficient time to plan and apply the method properly, including the necessary analysis of the data collected.

Critical Factors

Evidence can only be gathered effectively if sufficient time and thought is given to the aims and objectives of the evaluation. Furthermore, it is imperative that access is gained to the main sources of evidence. As Nixon (1992) points out:

‘If this principle of negotiated access is neglected, the evaluation may well serve to alienate sections of the school community.’

(Nixon 1992 p47)

It is also important to make sure that the method chosen to gather the evidence will be acceptable to the people involved.

‘Most people enjoy being interviewed unless they suspect an underlying motive. Classroom observation is more difficult.....
In general, the more those who will be taking part in an evaluation activity can be involved in its planning, the more likely they are to find the methods acceptable.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p170)

The well-documented advantages and disadvantages of the various research methods need addressing, which is why it is preferable to triangulate. If only one method is used, verification of evidence can be a problem.

Practical Application

The Rolphs, aware of the fact that deliberation, as identified by Schwab, needs fostering, base their work on Personal Construct Theory (Kelly 1955). This involves looking at how each person perceives what is happening, in relation to predetermined elements of the curriculum, and evaluating them in relation to certain criteria – on a ‘repertory grid’ (Kelly 1955).

The repertory grid, as a means of gathering evidence, is:

‘a form of structured interview, the word element being used to describe the significant aspects of the area in which the person’s perspectives are to be explored and the word construct to represent the units of meaning with which those elements are interpreted and evaluated.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p123)

In preparation for gathering the evidence, the Rolphs divide the deliberative process into stages:

‘so it could be clearly presented to the staff and students involved.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p124)

These stages comprise:

- ‘The identification of the course to be evaluated
- The identification of the evaluation team
- The identification of the elements
- The identification of the constructs by which each element was to be evaluated
- The compilation and production of the evaluation sheets’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p125)

Analysis and Dissemination

All evaluation findings need analysing, which entails sorting, collating and reducing the findings into manageable proportions. The method(s) used will determine the way in which the findings are analysed. Quantitative techniques tend to be analysed numerically, whereas those, which are qualitative, are analysed textually.

Where triangulation is used, it may be possible to produce ‘inter-subjective’ agreement, to clarify aspects under study (Clemmett & Pearce 1986).

The ways in which findings are disseminated reflect the management approach towards evaluation in an institution. When putting forward his case for a collegial approach to evaluation, Nixon (1992), argues for the following, which has implications for the way in which information is analysed and disseminated:

- ‘following each data collection period there should be an opportunity to refine and sharpen the focus of the evaluation and to reformulate the questions being addressed.’

(Nixon 1992 p44)

Dissemination will depend upon what type of evaluation is being undertaken. External evaluation, such as FEFC or Ofsted, once complete, enters the public domain and is available for scrutiny by any interested party. The findings from internal evaluations, however, may be classed as private and official, with restricted access (Scott 1990).

Critical Factors

Analysing data requires considerable skill and expertise. Problems can arise if insufficient time and effort is put into this stage, since from the analysed findings decisions are made about future action.

‘The processes of data analysis...are the core of any evaluation process because it is from analysis that conclusions are drawn.’

(Clemmett and Pearce 1986 p123)

Evaluators need to realise that their report can be damaging and threatening, and that difficulties can arise if the evaluation report is not put together in a sensitive way. Clemmett and Pearce (1986) highlight this when discussing their evaluation of pastoral care:

‘It is important to remember that people own the facts of their lives. This report, though independent and honest, must be sensitive to the needs of the audience and the pupils and display tact and humanity.’

(Clemmett & Pearce 1986 p123)

Further problems can arise when disseminating information. Aspinwall et al (1992) point to two main problems. The first one being:

‘that of identifying who the interested parties are’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p191)

It is likely that all those who have contributed to the evaluation will be interested, and so will:

‘Other supporters or interested groups....these might be other staff, parents, governors or other institutions.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p191)

Although some, such as pupils, are often forgotten.

The second problem they identify is:

‘how to keep these groups sufficiently informed without overwhelming them.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p191)

Presenting too much information will be off-putting and any written report needs to be brief and to the point. Aspinwall et al (1992) suggest that feedback need not totally be in the form of a written report. Verbal reports can be just as useful, as part of an ongoing dissemination of findings. Furthermore, challenges to the findings can be addressed during this verbal reporting stage:

‘anyone who challenges these findings should be encouraged to either provide different, valid evidence of his or her own or preferably to join in the process of enquiry.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p192)

Practical Application

After gathering their evidence, the Rolphs embarked on a:

‘deliberation based on the perspectives revealed by the completed evaluation sheets.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p127)

This involves inviting a participant with a positive response on a particular rating scale, to discuss their perspective with a participant with a negative response on that same rating scale:

‘Other participants were drawn into the deliberation as it developed.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p127)

Once the Rolphs felt that sufficient consideration had been given to the construct, they went on to the next one, and so on, until all the evaluation sheets had been considered.

Following this a report was written, consisting of:

‘a written summary of the deliberation presented under the headings of Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations for Change.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p127)

The report was then disseminated to all those involved in the evaluation process and comments were invited. Once it was agreed that the report was a fair reflection of what had been said it was presented to the College’s Review Committee (Rolph & Rolph 1989).

Utilisation

Implicit in an institution's commitment to evaluation, is the requirement to take action as a result of the insights gained. Evaluation can be used as a formative process to manage change in an institution.

However, ethical considerations need to be made when utilising an evaluation. As Aspinwall et al (1992) argue:

‘An ethical approach to evaluation will acknowledge and take into account the power/political dimension. It will not promote the interests of the powerful at the expense of others unable to protect themselves.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p123)

Consequently, the more consultative, shared and open the process is, the more possible it is to successfully address any issues; although it should not be assumed that everyone in an institution will take the findings on board and want to change their practice.

Critical Factors

A number of factors can inhibit effective utilisation, which permeate through the evaluative process as a whole. Aspinwall et al (1992), in their study of a secondary school, for example, found that there were insufficient resources to enable the school to take on board the recommendations resulting from the evaluation. Furthermore, the evaluation did not address the main issues, nor did it involve the institution's key people - resulting in there being a lack of commitment to taking action. This can be problematic because findings often require drastic action.

A further factor influencing the utilisation of an evaluation is power. Certain groups within an organisation have the power to implement (or not) change arising from an evaluation. This power can stem from a number of factors, all of which need considering by an evaluator when embarking on the evaluative process:

‘Expertise...Control of information...Control of rewards and resources...Formal authority....Physical force...Personality.’

(Aspinwall et al 1992 p195)

Practical Application

The recommendations put forward in the Rolphs’ (1989) study were utilised by the college when:

‘documents were being prepared for the revalidation of the degree and various changes were made to the old degree structure and pattern of assessment’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 p127)

Furthermore, the fact that this system of evaluation was undertaken in an open and sensitive manner led to the authors’ comments that:

‘Everyone felt that they had had the opportunity to express and to defend, where necessary, their viewpoints in an atmosphere of honesty and mutual respect. Special satisfaction was expressed that the deliberation had led to recommendations for change which had subsequently been implemented.’

(Rolph & Rolph 1989 pp127-128)

Peer Evaluation

The concept of peer evaluation has successfully evolved over the last twenty-five years, particularly in the field of education (Wicks 1992). Many writers view it as a useful tool for quality control and quality enhancement (Pond et al 1995). Appraisal systems, for example, very often incorporate peer evaluation. In educational institutions this may involve the use of peers in classroom observation.

However, observation by peers can be problematic, if observers are unable to divorce themselves from the relationship. Although guidelines produced by the Suffolk Education Department (1985), which point out the need for classroom observation to be based on criteria and schedules, as well as the importance of sufficient training for all observers, help to counteract this.

Peer review is also advocated as an appropriate quality measure in higher education. A review from Wicks (1992), designed to ascertain what institutions could use in their future planning, focused on:

‘what aspects of the national quality assurance system operated by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) have been valued by those in education’

(Wicks 1992 p57)

The CNAA used peer review, by drawing experts from polytechnics and colleges, universities, professions, commerce and industry and asking them to judge standards and:

‘review the processes of monitoring, maintaining and enhancing standards in higher education.’

(Wicks 1992 p61)

These experts also shared their experiences with colleagues and gave examples of good practice.

Judgements are made using evidence from discussions with staff and students, together with documents which describe, and critically review, the course/element under review, and reports from external examiners. They also view students work and the resources/facilities available to them.

Wicks (1992) found that, as a mechanism for quality assurance and promotion of learning, peer review appears to work. He put this down to the way in which the network of experts operates. The criterion for being part of the network is proven expertise, rather than level of post. It also includes people from outside education, which brings a wider perspective into the debate.

In terms of co-ordination, the network was centrally maintained, with recognised experts who could be referred to, when necessary, about national issues. New people were introduced to it, whilst maintaining the contribution of others. Furthermore, those in the system took collective responsibility for ensuring students, wherever they were studying, got the best education they could.

In conclusion, Wicks (1992) highlights several prerequisites for the successful implementation of peer review:

- The course team should initiate the agenda
- There must be mutual respect between the judges and those being judged
- Written evidence should be submitted before the discussions, in order to save time, although these documents should be succinct
- The criteria on which judgements are made should reflect the standards set for the programmes of study

She also concludes that peer review is a useful quality control tool, because:

‘It is a flexible system capable of yielding credible judgements based on wide ranges of evidence. It is adaptable, can reflect and respect the traditions of those being reviewed, and can evolve to suit new needs.’

(Wicks 1992 p67)

Summary

The literature discussed has influenced the design of the research into the British Association for Counselling’s partnership scheme. In order to establish the effectiveness of the scheme, an examination will be undertaken of its supportive and monitoring functions and its intrinsic value. Concepts of partnership, mentoring, accountability and evaluation, and evidence of their applicability in education, provide a valuable basis for this.

By drawing on the concepts discussed in the partnership section of the literature review, it should be possible to analyse the effectiveness of the scheme in terms of its aims, objectives and constituent parts. These concepts include the functions of partnerships and the link between partnership structure and effectiveness.

The mentoring literature will help to demonstrate whether the scheme’s supportive function can be allied to an established mentoring model, or whether a model can be developed which encompasses the support participants receive from the scheme. Concepts of particular importance include pairing of mentors, characteristics of an effective mentor, training, group mentoring and development of mentoring schemes.

Accountability and evaluation literature will be used to analyse the monitoring function of the scheme, with a view to ascertaining whether monitoring and supporting can be effective, when undertaken simultaneously. Concepts to be considered include the nature and purpose of both accountability and evaluation; effective evaluation and peer evaluation.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The methodological approach adopted was informed by the purpose of the research and the research questions being asked. The purpose of the research is to examine the BAC partnership scheme, with a view to ascertaining its effectiveness. This involves a detailed analysis of its supportive function, monitoring function and intrinsic value. Following this analysis proposals will be made to BAC regarding whether or not the partnership scheme should continue in its present form, or whether it should be revised or discontinued.

The research questions, which emanate from the purpose, determine the appropriateness of different research methods. The answers to the research question ‘What are the functions of the partnership scheme?’ are quantifiable, and lend themselves to a more quantitative approach. The remaining three research questions seek opinions: ‘Are they effective? (this relates to functions); Is the partnership scheme valued by the accredited Courses?’; ‘How can the partnership scheme be improved?’. Accordingly, they are more suited to a qualitative approach.

Methodological Approaches

When selecting the approach to adopt consideration was given to the different research methods used in educational research: case studies, surveys, documentary analysis, participant and non-participant observation and interviews.

Historically, researchers have chosen methods that best fit their philosophical beliefs. Those wishing to follow the scientific tradition of being objective and rigorous, the normative paradigm, follow the more quantifiable methods - for

example experiments and surveys, and seek to aggregate their findings. Although, as Johnson (1994) points out:

‘It is recognised that no piece of social research can be entirely objective, since no research is value free.’

(Johnson 1994 p7)

Those researchers choosing qualitative methods, the interpretive paradigm - interviews and participant observation, for example - are more interested in investigating the meanings behind events and behaviour.

The research into the BAC partnership scheme can be classified as eclectic as the most appropriate methods to address the research questions are used, rather than one particular approach being slavishly followed. Cohen and Manion (1996) highlight the benefits of this when they point out that it is more important to:

‘abandon the spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative data (and be) concerned rather with that combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each.’

(Cohen and Manion 1996 p40)

Case Studies

A popular approach to research, case studies involve the use of many different sources of evidence to investigate a social phenomenon. McNeill (1990) points out that:

‘A case study can be carried out, using almost any method of research though the less statistical methods are usual.’

(McNeill 1990 p87)

Researchers use case studies to examine events and their implications over a period of time. Acker (1990) uses this approach in her study of life at Hillsview Primary School, during which time she charted the changes in teacher's perspectives and practices following the introduction of legislation that affected the work they undertook in the classroom. She used observation, documentary analysis and interviews - concluding that primary school teachers feel threatened by government initiatives and their potential impact.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Case studies are useful because they give an all round picture of phenomena, as Kogan et al (1984) point out:

‘The case study method has as one of its strengths the ability to explore diversity of practice.’

(Kogan et al 1984 p182)

The data produced are descriptive and can focus on the meanings attributed to behaviour. Johnson (1994) takes up this point:

‘a single case study can provide descriptive data, address problems of meaning, examine the record of past events and relate it to present activity.’

(Johnson 1994 p22)

Also case study reports tend to present an all round picture and are written in such a way as to be understandable by non-researchers:

‘hence a more widely accessible form of research outcome than is sometimes the case with other methods.’

(Johnson 1994 p22)

Furthermore, using a number of different research methods reduces the effect of those methodological limitations associated with using a single method.

Triangulating in this way means the researcher can have more confidence in the findings and although the method does not claim generalisability:

‘it may prompt further, more wide-ranging research, providing ideas to be followed up later, or it may be that some broad generalisation is brought to life by a case-study.’

(McNeill 1990 pp87-88)

However, they are criticised for lacking scientific rigour. There are no rules for undertaking a case study, the design depends upon the topic being researched. Also, the findings may not be replicable, particularly if the case study is focused on a unique situation. A further criticism is that:

‘the exploratory nature of the work may tempt the researcher down a particular pathway, to the detriment of other lines of enquiry.’

(Johnson 1994 p23)

Surveys

Surveys are described as large-scale investigations into events or the connections between them. Stevens et al (1993) characterise them as:

‘easily applicable to large groups of respondents; exploratory, suitable for a broad introductory approach; mostly directed at describing population characteristics or defining and establishing connections between variables.’

(Stevens 1993 p79)

Surveys, typically, go through a set of pre-defined stages. Important preliminary considerations of any survey are:

‘the exact purpose of the enquiry; the population on which it is to focus; and the resources that are available.’

(Cohen and Manion 1994 p85)

These considerations determine the outcome of the next stage, which is deciding on sample size and the way in which it will be chosen. The sample will be drawn from the total research population, using one of a number of sampling techniques. Another consideration at this stage is the particular type of survey to be used, self-completion/postal, via the telephone or a face-to-face interview. The next stage is questionnaire design. The questions asked in a survey will be standardised, in order to elicit equivalent information from all respondents. Where possible, the survey will be piloted, in order to identify any problems, and amended. The main survey will then be carried out and the findings coded and analysed. The final stage is writing up the final report.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The survey approach has both strengths and weaknesses. It is a useful approach to use if the population is large, as it is relatively cheap and quick to administer. Furthermore, findings can be generalised from the sample to the wider population, providing appropriate sampling techniques have been employed, as McNeill (1990) points out:

‘If the survey is properly conducted, the results are reliable and representative of a much wider population than that directly investigated.’

(McNeill 1990 p46)

Another strength of this approach is that it provides a large amount of descriptive data, the important parts of which can be further explored, using a more qualitative approach.

One of the weaknesses of this approach, however, is its superficiality. Because standardised questions are asked, and responses coded, respondents are not given the opportunity to give in-depth answers. It is also criticised for not having the flexibility required to deal with sensitive or embarrassing issues. This highlights the validity problem with this approach:

‘Fundamentally, the survey method finds out what people will say when they are being interviewed, or filling in a questionnaire. This may not be the same thing as what they actually think or do. There is therefore a major potential problem with the validity of the findings of such research.’

(McNeill 1990 p47)

Furthermore, surveys can be subject to bias:

‘if the sample is flawed in some way then generalising from the survey findings can produce seriously biased statements.’

(Johnson 1994 p18)

Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis is used by many researchers, from both the quantitative and qualitative tradition, since it lends itself to both styles of research. The main difference between this is how the contents of documents are analysed.

Documents are usually pieces of written text, which relate to some aspect of the social world. They can be divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary documentary sources are those that come into existence during the period under

research, for example: minutes of meetings. Secondary documentary sources are interpretations of events from a particular period, which are based on primary sources; for example: a history of a school that obtained evidence from minutes of the governor's meetings.

There are different types of documentary evidence and Scott (1990) classifies them in terms of authorship and access. Authorship refers to the origin of documents and he distinguishes between 'personal' and 'public' (official) documents. Access relates to the availability of documents to people other than their authors.

Having located the appropriate documents the researcher needs to assess their quality. The most widely used quality control criteria are those put forward by Scott (1990): authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.

Authenticity

This refers to whether a document is genuine. Although it is very rare to encounter deliberate falsehood in documentary sources, it is more common to find records or factual accounts have been slightly altered to suit the author's original purpose (Le Compte and Goetz 1982). Therefore a researcher must be alert to, for example, unexpected changes in text and also check for consistency and plausibility, both internally and externally.

Credibility

This criterion is used to assess whether the document is free from error or distortion. Distortion may occur when there is a long time between the event and the account of it being written. It can also occur when the account has been through several hands and the author of the document was not present at the event. Credibility can be affected by the interest of the author which might, for example, be to please the reader.

Representativeness

Using documentary sources in large-scale research inevitably involves some form of sampling, therefore, it is important to ask how representative a document is of the 'reality' being investigated. It is often too difficult to ascertain how representative a document is because of the lack of an index of all appropriate documents. Some documents may have been destroyed or removed; some may have withered away. Unfortunately, this can mean evidence is contaminated by the bias inherent in selective survival and availability. As Platt (1981) pointed out:

'A single reference to a phenomenon may indicate the start of a trend or the existence of a pattern, but it may be just historically idiosyncratic.'

(Platt 1981 p35)

Meaning

Establishing the meaning of a document takes place on two levels: the surface (or literal) meaning and the deeper meaning, which is arrived at by some form of interpretative understanding or structural analysis (Gilbert 1993). Understanding surface meanings should not prove too difficult for researchers, although language does differ between different groups, cultures and periods. However, eliciting deeper meanings can be problematic, for, as Scott (1990) pointed out, the study of text taken in isolation from its social context is deprived of its real meaning.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Documentary analysis, as a research tool, has a number of strengths, as outlined by Johnson (1994). It is a relatively cheap method to use (depending upon where the documents are located) and it brings together previously unrelated material to illustrate a topic. It also enables an enquiry into past events and issues, and increases knowledge, by bringing to light material which has not previously had

wide circulation. It is an unobtrusive method of research and can act as supplementary evidence for data collected by other means.

Despite these strengths, there is, as with all research methods, a number of weaknesses specific to documentary analysis: The documents would, in most cases, have been prepared for purposes other than those of the researcher. Furthermore, documents are not objective, they are socially constructed and, therefore, need to be interpreted in the light of any ideological/social contexts. It is also important to note that the document cannot be taken at face value and it needs to be assessed for authenticity, credibility and representativeness.

Observation

Observation, both participant and non-participant, is another tool available to researchers.

Participant observation is a qualitative research technique that has its roots in the anthropological tradition. Participant observation involves the researcher observing people in their natural setting, as opposed to the more artificial contexts of the laboratory interview. It allows researchers to see what people do, as opposed to what they say they do.

Non-participant observation involves the researcher being apart from the group under study. A good illustration of this is where the researcher sits at the back of a classroom monitoring and coding types of behaviour, for example, the verbal exchanges between a teacher and his/her pupils.

Interviews

Interviews involve the researcher meeting individual subjects and collecting data directly from them, for the purpose of obtaining information relevant to the research questions. There are different types of interview and the choice of which one to use is determined by the nature of the research being undertaken.

At one end of the continuum there are structured interviews, where the questions are read out in the same order using the same words to all respondents. The researcher then records the data in a systematic way. This is particularly suitable for simple, straightforward, 'factual' information such as respondent's age, gender, educational qualifications and occupation.

Structured interviews are seen as more likely to produce comparable data, since all respondents answer the same questions, and are favoured by quantitative rather than qualitative researchers. Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that:

‘they have the advantage of achieving greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability.’

(Cohen and Manion 1994 p276)

Unstructured interviews, however, are more like an everyday conversation. They are more informal, open ended, flexible and free flowing. Questions are unlikely to be pre-set, though researchers usually have certain topics they wish to cover, which gives the interview some structure and direction. They are also valuable as a tool for discovering views on sensitive subjects or for using with sensitive groups. Furthermore, interviewers:

‘require skills not only to encourage the respondent to talk but also skills to assimilate what is being said.’

(Stevens et al p51)

Semi-structured interviews fall between the above two extremes and consist of certain major questions being asked in the same way each time, although the sequence can alter. The interviewer will also prompt for further information. This makes the data gathering more flexible, enabling it to:

‘adapt to the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed.’

(Johnson 1994 p45)

Strengths and Weaknesses

Interviews have many strengths. Gilbert (1993) highlighted the versatility of them, pointing out that they can be used to identify the main behavioural group to be sampled, and lend insight into how they should be defined. They also enable a researcher to become acquainted with phraseology and concepts used by a population of respondents.

They are also useful for establishing the relevant dimensions of attitudes, enabling the formation of tentative hypotheses about the motivation underlying behaviour and attitudes (although this is a debated point). Unstructured interviews are useful for discovering meanings, values, opinions and beliefs. People often take these for granted and find it difficult to spell them out. A skilled interviewer can encourage respondents to express them, often eliciting surprising responses, as outlined by Cohen and Manion (1994):

‘Open-ended situations can result in unexpected or unanticipated answers which may suggest hitherto unthought-of-relationships or hypotheses.’

(Cohen and Manion 1994 p277)

However, interviews also have weaknesses. People may lie in their responses; the interviewer may engage in misdirected probing and prompting; and the cultural context in which the researcher is located may be ignored. A further problem is interviewer bias, or interviewer effect. This manifests itself in the characteristics of both interviewer and respondent and the content of the questions. Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that this can be identified by:

‘the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer; a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image; a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions; misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying; and misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked.’

(Cohen and Manion 1994 p282)

Choice of Method

The research methods finally chosen were: documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, a survey and case studies. Documentary analysis was used to give an overall picture of the scheme and semi-structured interviews because they are flexible enough to explore views of the partnership scheme from different perspectives. A survey was undertaken to provide breadth and representativeness. Case studies were included to provide depth, detail and both methodological and respondent triangulation. The methods used within the case studies were documentary analysis, survey and semi-structured interviews. Observation was not considered a viable method to use. Participant observation would not be possible as all participants of partnership meetings know one another. Furthermore, there were insufficient resources available to enable a cross section of partnership meetings to be observed, in a non-participant way.

Data Collection

Negotiating Access

This was a fairly drawn out process, because, as a membership organisation, permission had to be obtained from a number of sources. Initially, the Chief Executive was approached. Having discussed the proposal with her, she was happy that it would not only fulfil the needs of the researcher but would also provide invaluable information for the Association.

Once the Chief Executive consented, the Chair of the Association, representing the Management Committee, was asked for her approval. The Chair gave her approval providing the Courses Accreditation Management Group agreed and that all the accredited courses engaging in the scheme were asked for permission to use data from the annual report forms that participants in the scheme submitted.

At the Courses Accreditation Management Group committee meeting the research proposal was discussed and they backed it unanimously, hoping that it would inform their review of the course accreditation scheme.

All courses engaged in the scheme were asked for permission to use the annual report forms. The purpose of the research was clarified and the confidentiality aspect discussed. Although courses were asked to respond if they did not want to take part, a number of letters were received giving permission and support for the research. None of the courses refused access to the report forms.

Although this initial stage took three months to complete, the effort was worthwhile because, as Johnson (1994) points out:

‘the negotiation of research access, if appropriately carried through, can make all the difference to the success of a project.’

(Johnson 1994 p10)

The next step was to identify and contact five courses to take part in both the pilot survey and case studies. The selection process was carried out with the accreditation services manager and because of the many variants it was not possible to employ a standardised sampling technique. The intention was to select courses that represented the main core theoretical models, the different institutional types and size, and to include a cross section of partnerships, in respect of duration, mix of theoretical model and organisational type.

Unfortunately, no further education institution was available and, because, one institution had to be replaced, the private sector was also not represented. The five courses eventually included were: three from the statutory sector, higher

education, and two from the non-statutory sector, not-for-profit. However, the sample included those who had been involved in their partnership for varying lengths of time and the main theoretical models were represented.

Preliminary Investigation

This comprised documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews

Documentary Analysis

Three sets of documents were analysed. The Recognition of Counsellor Training Courses handbook; the CAMG partnership co-ordinators annual reports (from 1996 and 1997); and annual report forms submitted by those courses being used as case studies.

Recognition of Counsellor Training Courses Handbook

This booklet states and clarifies the criteria that constitute the basic requirements for an accredited course. It also describes the process of accreditation and the various stages through which a course application will need to pass in order to achieve accredited status. The last part outlines the management of the scheme and gives details of the fee structure.

As a document it can be classified, according to Scott's (1990) typology, as official and private, with restricted access. This is because BAC produces it for use within the Association, and access to it is normally closed to outsiders, unless permission from insiders is secured. Interested parties can buy the booklet from the Association.

It is a useful document because it represents the culmination of a long process of negotiation between many experienced practitioners and trainers, particularly as it would not have been possible, in terms of time and financial cost, to interview all those who contributed their views on counsellor training standards.

In terms of authenticity, credibility and representativeness (Scott 1990), this document is both credible and authentic, since it was produced specifically for publication in this format, with a view to being disseminated to counsellor training providers. In terms of being representative, it is the only document in the particular stage of the process it represents.

CAMG partnership co-ordinators annual reports

The two reports analysed were put together by different people, because the new Deputy Chair of CAMG took over the role of partnership co-ordinator at the end of 1997. The reports draw together responses made by accredited courses on the annual report form.

The documents can be classified as official with closed access (Scott 1990). This is because they were produced by the CAMG, for use within it, and access to them is restricted to CAMG and the Management Committee.

In terms of authenticity, credibility and representativeness (Scott 1990), these too are both credible and authentic, since their production was specifically geared towards reporting on the annual report forms for the CAMG. Once again they are representative in that they are the only documents with that purpose.

Semi-structured Interviews

The first partnership co-ordinator, who devised the scheme, was interviewed initially (appendix one), followed by the current partnership co-ordinator (appendix two) and the BAC accreditation services manager (appendix three).

The framework for the three initial interviews was similar. Attention was paid to themes in the literature when constructing the interview schedules. The literature on partnerships focuses on functions and this links with the questions about purpose and the way in which the scheme operates (see appendices one, two and three).

The respondents were also asked about any difficulties they had with the scheme's administration; the benefits; and their overall opinion. The person who devised the scheme was also asked about the reasoning behind its design.

These interviews were designed to give an overall picture of the scheme and how it operates. They were semi-structured because it was important for the respondents to answer in their own terms, rather than be confined to precoded responses. This is in line with Johnson's (1994) view that being flexible means that respondents' different characteristics and circumstances can be accommodated.

It was not appropriate, however, for the interviews to be unstructured because this would inhibit comparison of the different respondents' answers. However, the structure was sufficiently open to allow for probing, particularly when, as Hoinville and Jowell (1978) point out:

‘Respondents use ambiguous words... or make vague references.’

(Hoinville and Jowell 1978 p101)

Finding sufficient time to undertake the interviews was not a problem, since both partnership co-ordinators attended meetings at the BAC head office, and made themselves available. The accreditation services manager is based at the head office and availability was not a problem.

The inevitable charge of interviewer bias can be levied at this type of interview, particularly in respect of the accreditation services manager, who, as a close colleague, was influential in the choice of research topic. However, bias in some form is an aspect of all types of research, as Cohen and Manion (1994) point out:

‘No matter how hard an interviewer may try to be systematic and objective, the constraints of everyday life will be a part of whatever interpersonal transactions she initiates.’

(Cohen & Manion 1994 p275)

Survey

All accredited courses that had partners at the time of the research, thirty-eight, were invited to take part in the survey, in either the pilot or the main survey.

Pilot Survey

This was sent to the five course leaders who had agreed to take part in the case studies. The decision to link the pilot survey with the case studies was taken for the following reasons. There was a limited population, of only 38 courses, and the aim was to involve as many as possible in the main survey. The number of survey respondents would be reduced if some were removed from the final survey because they had been part of the pilot. Furthermore, in terms of completeness it was beneficial to put all five case studies in an equivalent position and all main survey participants in a similar position (which would not have happened if some of them had been part of the case study research).

The pilot survey, as a research instrument, was designed in such a way as to take account of the research questions and the themes that emerged from the literature review. Effective partnerships, according to the literature, have a number of characteristics and the sections on purpose, process and outcomes were designed to test this out. The mentoring, evaluation and accountability literature was also tested in these sections; for example in the purpose section the effectiveness of both mentoring and monitoring is discussed and respondents are given the opportunity to comment in detail on this.

The aim of the pilot was to test the questions, in terms of relevance and clarity, and then identify omissions. Although the aim of the survey was to establish the partnership schemes effectiveness, the word 'effective' was substituted for 'useful' in the questions as it was likely to have a clearer meaning for participants.

Pre-coded categories were included in the survey, to facilitate analysis and make it easier for participants to complete. However, because participants were allowed to expand their answers, as appropriate, through the 'comments' sections, this should have reduced the affect of invalid answers.

As well as completing the pilot survey, respondents were asked to comment on the survey's fitness for purpose, and asked to identify any changes they felt might be relevant. A number of changes were made to each of the sections within the survey, following the pilot and comments received. This highlights how important it is to undertake a pilot, because, as McNeill (1990) points out:

'Any problems with the wording of the draft questionnaire should show up at this stage and can be corrected before the real investigation starts.'

(McNeill 1990 p34)

The pilot questionnaire is located in Appendix 4.

Structure

In this section, questions were taken out if the information was readily obtainable elsewhere, for example: date of BAC accreditation, name of partner and date partnership commenced. Institutions were also not expected to give their name, questionnaires were numbered instead.

Also, one of the pilot survey questions asked for individual staff contract hours (a problem if, as for one course, there are 52 staff). Not only was this question

difficult to code, but such detail was not required. Therefore, the question was changed to:

‘How many full time staff in the course team?

How many part time staff in the course team?

Purpose

This section was also changed. The pilot survey separated support and mentoring, when assessing the usefulness of the partnership. However, these two concepts were interpreted similarly by respondents, so in the final survey they were combined. Also ‘promoting development’ in the pilot was separated in the final survey – ‘encouraging course development’ and ‘encouraging personal development for course teams’.

Process

The question relating to dates, numbers of students/staff present and duration of partnership meetings, also required information that was not readily available for most and it involved a lot of work for the respondents. It was, therefore, changed to:

‘On average, how many meetings do you and your partner have per year?

Give details of any exceptions to this pattern over the last 3 years.

How many staff and students are usually involved in these meetings?

Give details of any exceptions to this pattern over the last 3 years.’

Questions were added to this section. Course leaders were asked to give details about other types of activity they engaged in with their partners, other than meetings. Also, the questions relating to the structure of the annual report form, and the questions within it, were supplemented with:

‘Give details of any questions you would like to see left out.

Give details of any questions you would like added.’

Outcomes

In this section there was the addition of questions relating to the benefits and disadvantages of being partnered with a course from a similar or different organisational context. As one course leader pointed out:

‘These were much more significant than core model differences for us.’

The revised questionnaire for the main survey is located in Appendix 5.

Main Survey

Although there were considerable changes in this research instrument, the underlying themes from the literature, which influenced the design of the pilot survey (as discussed earlier), still apply.

Response Rate

There was a high response rate to the main survey, 81%, with respondents coming from a variety of institutional types, see Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

% Response Rate by Institutional Type

Institutional Type	%
Higher Education	38
Private	27
Further Education	15
Not-for-Profit	20

There are a number of reasons for the response rate being high. Firstly, they were sent to named people, course leaders, which meets the criterion Johnson sets out:

‘Self-completion questionnaires must find their way into the hands of appropriate respondents.’

(Johnson 1994 p40)

Secondly, the motivation to complete the questionnaire was high, because each respondent had been written to, prior to the questionnaire being distributed, explaining, amongst other things, the importance of their input. Also, it was in the respondents’ interest to complete the questionnaire, since the survey’s outcome could directly affect them.

However, although the response rate was high, a large number of respondents did not complete by the required date. A number of them were written to, and telephoned, at least three times before the questionnaire was returned. This, in part, was due to timing. The questionnaire was sent out during August 1998, and the return date was mid-September. This was not a problem for many institutions in the private or further education sectors. However, in the higher education sector the new term did not commence until October and many staff chose to work from home, thereby not receiving the questionnaire until much later.

Findings

Categorising the findings was fairly unproblematic, although there were some anomalies. The question asking for core theoretical model of the course produced a variety of answers. However, in the analysis these were categorised under the three broad headings: person centred, psychodynamic, and integrative.

The main difficulty arose because of a misunderstanding of one of the questions. course leaders were asked to rate the partnership scheme in terms of value, in respect of the financial cost (e.g. travel, loss of income). It was apparent from the comments that some of the respondents simply rated the financial cost; for example, they put ‘high’ if they felt the cost was high. This is an example of one of the pitfalls highlighted by McNeill (1990):

‘The wording of questions, especially closed questions and those asked in a postal questionnaire, must be clear, precise and unambiguous. Questions must not presume that respondents have more knowledge than in fact they have.’

(McNeill 1990 p27)

Not every respondent commented, therefore, it was not possible to tell how many had misinterpreted the question.

Outcome

Because the entire population was included in the research, the charge of having a ‘flawed sample’ is avoided. However, it is still the case that the survey did not allow for topics to be explored in depth. To counter this difficulty findings from the survey were used to inform the case study interviews.

Of particular interest was the conflict between the supporting and mentoring roles and factors inhibiting the development of a successful partnership, building on the comments made about partnerships involving different core theoretical models and/or organisational contexts.

Case Studies

Evidence from the case studies derived from three different methodological approaches, documentary analysis, the pilot survey (discussed in the survey section) and a series of semi-structured interviews. The evidence collected, therefore, was diverse and gives an insight into how the partnership scheme is experienced, a feature of case studies highlighted by both Kogan et al (1984) and Johnson (1994).

Finding courses to participate, initially, was not too problematic, although the further education sector was not represented. However, the course from the

private sector withdrew, and the last minute substitute came from the not-for-profit sector, which meant the private sector was not represented either. The case studies did, however, represent four different theoretical models and included those with partners from both similar and different core models and organisational contexts.

The main difficulty, as mentioned earlier, was when one of the case study institutions decided to withdraw. This occurred following the group interview, after the notes were sent to the course leaders for verification. One month later they replied, stating that although they did not refute the accuracy of what was said, they were unhappy with the 'tone' of what was written and had decided to withdraw.

They were then contacted again, asking whether they would like to amend the notes or resubmit their views, rather than withdraw. They replied three weeks later, declining to take up the offer. Fortunately, another course agreed to step in, although the interviews were conducted by telephone, because of pressures of time.

Documentary Analysis

Annual Report Forms

As part of ongoing accreditation, courses are required to submit an annual report to BAC on the process of consultation. The report should include details of changes to the course, ethical problems and other issues or points relating to the partnership. Any breaches of Codes of Ethics must be disclosed to the partner and be included in the report.

Accredited courses are also expected to keep a record of partnership consultations, which will serve as a basis for partnership contributions to re-accreditation. Furthermore, the partner's report is an essential document in the re-accreditation process.

The aim was to analyse the past three annual report forms. However, in two instances the partnership had only been in existence for eighteen months (and only one report was available); in a further case the partnership was terminated because the partner's course closed; and for another partnership one of the reports was missing.

These reports can be classified, according to Scott's (1990) typology as official, private documents with closed access. This is because they are produced by courses involved in the partnership scheme and access to them is confined to the partners and CAMG representatives.

In terms of their authenticity, credibility and representativeness (Scott 1990), the reports are produced specifically for reporting on the partnership process and authorship is acknowledged. They are representative in that all reports describe the operational aspects of the partnership scheme, for example, dates and times of meetings, course changes and the implementation of any conditions and recommendations. However, in respect of content of meetings and issues encountered, these differ between courses, depending on whether the course is newly accredited, or established as an accredited course, although there is some commonality.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews forming part of the case studies were all semi-structured, although setting and structure differed in many cases. The flexibility of being semi-structured meant these differences in context could be accommodated, a point mentioned by Johnson (1994).

Themes from the literature were influential in designing the interview schedules. In particular, the importance of trust and communication – a feature of all the different literature components – was addressed. Also, the nature of the relationship between the case study course and BAC/CAMG was examined, which links with accountability and its effectiveness.

Members of six course teams were interviewed (appendix 6), although one course team dropped out. Two of the university course teams were interviewed as a group, with two in each group. In the other university two people were interviewed separately, and a further member of the team sent her comments through a third party. Of the remaining two institutions, both of charitable status, one set of interviews was conducted on the telephone (three in total) and the other comprised a separate interview and a group interview (a second person joining in).

In all but one of the case study courses the course leader was interviewed. The other course leader was ill, but sent in her comments via another respondent. In respect of other participants, this was dependent on availability. Because most staff are part-time, only at the institution when lecturing or for course team meetings, availability was restricted.

Availability also determined whether interviews were conducted separately or as a group. In initial negotiations it was requested that interviews should be conducted separately, however, in four instances time prevented this from occurring. Therefore, a conscious decision was made to proceed with group interviews, which enabled more than one opinion to be elicited.

The interview schedule was designed to follow the main survey, to allow comparison with the data and to probe deeper into pertinent issues. It also focused on those areas highlighted by the literature review: trust, relationships and communication.

The reasons for choosing semi-structured interviews for the case studies were as for the preliminary interviews, to allow consistency and comparability. They also facilitated the elaboration of issues that emerged from the survey, because of their flexibility (Johnson 1994).

It is important to consider the fact that the interviews were conducted in different circumstances, some group, some over the telephone and some individually.

Group Interviews

As a data collection technique this has both advantages and disadvantages. In respect of advantages, it can encourage the development of discussion, resulting in a variety of responses, particularly if the group comprises people who work together in the same environment. It is also successful with diverse groups, as Cohen and Manion (1994) point out:

‘the group interview can bring together people with varied opinions, or as representatives of different collectives.’

(Cohen and Manion 1994 p287)

Watts and Ebbutt (1987) found that, if respondents have been working together for some time and share a sense of purpose, group interviews can be useful. In respect of the case studies group interviews, the respondents all work in the same environment and have a common purpose. The discussion that developed between them was particularly useful when discussing the relative merits of the scheme and their experience of being in a partnership, which verifies Watts and Ebbutt's (1987) claim.

A main disadvantage of this type of interview is that it inhibits the discussion of personal issues, a point also mentioned by Watts and Ebbutt (1987). It also makes it difficult for the researcher to direct a series of follow-up questions to one member of the group. Furthermore, in a large group situation, some participants may not feel able to discuss issues in the presence of other people, particularly if they contradict other responses. There is also the lost potential of respondent triangulation to consider, which is a benefit arising from holding separate interviews.

However, in respect of the case studies, within the groups there did not appear to be a reluctance to speak. Although the course leaders tended to lead the discussions, other members of the group were happy to add comments, clarify points or initiate the introduction of further issues - where necessary.

Also, there was no mention of any personal issues, although they are not particularly pertinent to this research.

Telephone Interviews

Three of these took place, with people from the institution taking the place of the one that withdrew. One advantage of these, over group interviews, is the ease with which probing can take place individually, and the development of ideas. They also enable a more full and frank discussion to take place, particularly if the respondent is unaware that their comments conflict with other members of the team. In this instance, respondents all had different experiences of the partnership scheme and it gave the opportunity of exploring this with each of them. Another advantage is the speed with which the interviews can be undertaken (Fidler 1994), which proved useful in these circumstances.

A disadvantage is that cues from the respondent's body language cannot be picked up, and as Fidler (1994) points out:

‘Communication is limited to verbal and paralingual utterances’

(Fidler 1994 p284)

Furthermore, it is not possible to control the surroundings, the respondent may be talking in a place that does not guarantee privacy and confidentiality.

Individual Face-To-Face Interviews

These were useful, because they were conducted in suitable surroundings, and respondents were able to commit sufficient time to them. Pertinent issues were developed and participants spoke openly about their experiences.

Outcome

The case study approach was very useful for this piece of research, because it gave a fuller picture of the partnership scheme than is possible from using a single method. It also enabled a comparison to be made with findings from other research tools. Furthermore, it produced much more detailed and descriptive data, particularly in respect of meanings and behaviour, than the survey or documentary analysis (Johnson 1994).

This approach does not, however, stand-alone, because of its limited size and ad-hoc sampling. It cannot, therefore, be said to represent all those courses involved in the partnership scheme.

Reliability, Validity and Representation

The methodological approach adopted was triangulatory, involving the examination of a phenomenon from a number of standpoints. This means that the disadvantages of a particular research method can be counterbalanced by the advantages of another. The interviews undertaken in the case studies, for example, allowed for probing and in depth discussion, which the survey could not accommodate. Furthermore, the use of triangulation also means that issues of reliability, validity and representativeness can be addressed.

Reliability

If a method of collecting evidence is reliable, it means that anybody else using it, or the same person using it at another time, would achieve the same results. The research could be repeated and the same results would be obtained (McNeill 1990). Some methods are more reliable than others. Qualitative research techniques, which rely on the researcher's interpretation, are less likely to be reliable than quantitative techniques, which involve the systematic collection of data, for example pre-coded questionnaires.

The survey used in the research into the partnership scheme is more reliable because it involves a series of closed questions, requiring answers in pre-determined categories, enabling responses to be compared. The semi-structured interviews, however, are less reliable because, when interviewing, a researcher makes value judgements, in respect of what questions to ask, how to ask them and whether to probe. The documentary evidence is more reliable because all documents relating to the process were analysed and the researcher did not have to make a decision about which ones to choose.

Validity

Validity refers to the problem of whether the data collected is a true picture of what is being studied, is it really evidence of what it claims to be evidence of. This problem arises particularly when the data collected seem to be a product of the research method used rather than of what is being studied (McNeill 1990), for example, closed questions on a questionnaire may force people into a category which does not truly reflect their behaviour or attitudes.

The partnership scheme survey may fall into this category because of the closed questions asked. However, the survey gave respondents the opportunity to comment on each question, which increased its validity. The semi-structured interviews are potentially valid, because clarification was sought, and particular avenues explored. The documentary evidence, as previously mentioned, is authentic and, therefore, valid.

Representativeness

This refers to whether the group of people, or the situation, being studied is typical of others. If they are, then it is possible to conclude that what is true of this group is also true of others.

In respect of the survey, because the entire population was invited to take part, and 81% responded, then it is representative. Furthermore, because the scheme is unique to BAC course accreditation, no equivalence can be drawn elsewhere. The semi-structured interviews, however, followed a set format that, although there was the flexibility to pursue issues that emerged, makes the evidence less representative, because the issues discussed may not be relevant to other courses.

Some of the documentary evidence is representative, because it is the only information available. However, because only five sets of annual report forms were examined, and they relate to specific issues within a partnership and the course submitting the report, then it would be hard to classify these as representative.

As previously mentioned, the case studies, although giving detailed and descriptive data, cannot be generalised to the rest of the population, so these too are not representative.

Summary

The methodological approach taken proved to be fit for purpose. The breadth of evidence provided by the survey, and the depth that came from the case studies, interviews and documents, enabled the research questions to be answered effectively. This meant that a meaningful comparison could be made with the literature and, consequently, sound proposals offered to BAC in respect of how the partnership scheme can develop.

Chapter 4

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

Introduction

As part of the preliminary investigation, the person who devised the partnership scheme, and who acted as Courses Accreditation Management Group (CAMG) partnership co-ordinator until December 1997, was interviewed. The current partnership co-ordinator and the BAC accreditation services manager were also interviewed.

Documentary analysis was also undertaken on the partnership co-ordinators' annual reports for 1996 and 1997, based on the annual report forms prepared by each course. The 1998 report was not produced because of the late submission of the annual report forms and by the time they were all submitted CAMG had been disbanded and the partnership co-ordinator role put on hold.

Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured and respondents were all asked the same questions, although the past co-ordinator was also asked about the design of the scheme. The questions related to the scheme's purpose, processes, administration, benefits and disadvantages, role in the re-accreditation process and asked respondents for an overall opinion.

Purpose

The past partnership co-ordinator explained that originally the scheme was designed to be both practical and manageable. Although not meant to be prescriptive it nonetheless had three purposes. Firstly, to keep in touch with how the scheme was working in practice. Secondly, to help the courses, particularly if issues need addressing, rather than having to wait five years until re-accreditation.

Thirdly, to try and prevent accredited courses feeling isolated, as the scheme was new and not many courses were accredited.

He further explained that the intention was for the scheme to evolve. For example, monitoring, initially, did not feature, however:

‘monitoring grew as more courses were accredited and they weren’t known about in the same way as the original courses, whose leading figures were mostly on the committee.’

The other two respondents identified the main purposes as monitoring and supporting, as the partnership co-ordinator pointed out:

‘It is to monitor things like recommendations and also provide a supportive, mentoring and collegial relationship.’

She is not, however, convinced that monitoring in respect of recommendations works:

‘Courses tend to give information themselves, rather than it coming from their partner.’

Process

When the scheme was first established courses were partnered with the next most recently accredited course, unless there were obvious reasons for not doing so. However, as the past co-ordinator pointed out:

‘as time went on more thought went into the partnering.’

Both the past co-ordinator and the accreditation services manager discussed the potential problems of partnering courses in close proximity, particularly if they operate from the same core theoretical model. The accreditation services manager pointed out that:

‘It was originally thought that partners should be in close proximity, however, this can be problematic because of competition between courses.’

The past co-ordinator added:

‘recently we have asked whether pairing different core models could be more valuable, since it rules out competition – as they are appealing to different students.’

Courses are not always given a partner immediately. If there are an odd number of courses then a newly accredited course will have to wait until another is available. This has had an effect on their duration, as the accreditation services manager pointed out:

‘Originally a partnership was intended to be for five years, however, because some organisations have had to wait, and it sometimes takes time to get into ‘partnership mode’, they can continue for a further five years – which ensures the partner will be a part of the re-accreditation process.’

Administration

This consists of contacting courses to give them the details of their prospective partner, collating and reporting on the annual report forms and dealing with any enquiries or complaints. Difficulties can arise from these functions. Courses can refuse a particular pairing, if they wish. Furthermore, as the past co-ordinator highlighted:

‘once courses contact each other, and I formally made them partners, it could still take a long time for it to get going.’

Another problem is the late submission of the annual report forms. The co-ordinator pointed out that most come in around April/May, even though the

deadline is 31 January, and despite the fact that the BAC office staff chase course leaders for them. However, she adds:

‘This has been discussed by CAMG and we will become more stringent, in respect of the January date.’

Benefits

All three respondents thought the scheme beneficial, particularly in respect of professional development. Furthermore, they believed that it ensures standards are maintained. The past co-ordinator pointed out that:

‘It has given credibility to the whole accreditation process, by ensuring that standards are kept.’

The accreditation services manager echoes this:

‘A course can’t just sit back once it has been accredited. It forces them to look at certain things, e.g. recommendations, which should be explored with their partner.’

The past co-ordinator also thought that the scheme fostered openness towards developments and was educative.

Disadvantages

Monitoring was an aspect that respondents felt was problematic, as highlighted by the co-ordinator:

‘I’m not sure about its value as a monitoring tool for the implementation of recommendations. Monitoring needs to be done by a neutral body, rather than by a partner who is also there in a supportive role.’

Another difficulty mentioned was the pressure it places on organisations in terms of resources. As the accreditation services manager pointed out:

‘It is expensive to visit, particularly when students become involved.’

The past co-ordinator also added:

‘To some people the time and effort required proved impossible, or not necessary, because they were supported by other mechanisms and didn’t need more; so it was seen as a burden’

Re-accreditation

Respondents felt that having a partner is useful during re-accreditation, particularly in respect of the support they offer. This was discussed by the past co-ordinator:

‘Courses have found it helpful and they have felt stronger going forward for re-accreditation. It also makes them more practised in presenting themselves to someone else.’

However, the co-ordinator, who has been involved in a number of re-accreditation panels, is cautious about how the reports submitted by partners are viewed:

‘The reports are useful in that they identify what has been learnt and what developments have taken place. But, in terms of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of conditions and recommendations, made by the accreditation panel, that is a different matter.’

Overall Opinion

The respondents all thought the scheme worthwhile, although certain changes are required. The accreditation services manager pointed out that:

‘Partnerships as professional development are important. They also ensure changes are recorded and encourage courses to be proactive.’

She realised, however, that the monitoring aspect was not effective, but felt that:

‘without the monitoring aspect it would still be worth doing.’

The past co-ordinator, agreed with the above, and also suggested that something could be introduced that uses modern technology and avoids excessive form filling and filing.

The co-ordinator also mentions the report:

‘The report form could be done in a different way – enabling the course to discuss the recommendations and course changes, which is really important. It is also important for it to be done on an annual basis, or we would have no idea of what is happening.’

Documentary Analysis

The Annual Report for 1996, produced by the past co-ordinator, and the 1997 Report, produced by the current co-ordinator, were available.

1996 Report

This report draws together information from the annual report forms that all courses submit. Included in the report are:

- Issues requiring a response from CAMG
- Some examples of the benefits
- Quotes from reports of partnership meetings
- Issues needing addressing

The report's appendix gives details about the course, the number and structure of meetings. The report does not go into detail about the subjects covered at the meetings, any changes of staff, course curricula or complaints.

Issues Requiring CAMG Response

These included a problem with establishing a partnership; the problems one course had in respect of the re-accreditation report submitted by their partner and the termination of a very fruitful partnership, because one of the courses closed.

The co-ordinator, although recognising the difficulty it presented, wrote a comment about the last issue:

‘I think it significant to the work of CAMG that these two courses were representative of the two major core models of course within the scheme and BAC. They made a reality of the dream of partnership and so pioneered the way for those who have followed.’

Benefits

The report highlighted that courses initially approach partnerships reluctantly, concerned about the amount of time it requires, and the cost this entails. Once contact is made, reports tend to emphasise the value of meetings, exchange of ideas, strategies to deal with constraints, support and complaints procedures.

Quotes from Reports

The report includes a selection of quotes, for example:

‘The course feels it has gained an enormous amount from the consultative meetings, despite the very different core models and contrasting institutional settings. It was comforting to share so many common problems.’

‘We value sharing openly and non-defensively the problems and anguish caused by ‘difficult’ and ‘disturbed’ trainees’

‘It took the first two years to ‘get going’. This year was really useful and a positive exchange of ideas and programme issues.’

Issues Needing Addressing

The co-ordinator reported that the scheme, although having an ambivalent start, was growing and that participants are enthusiastic about it. However, a number of issues were raised, that needed consideration:

- Time involved in administering the scheme was increasing.
- A course may be without a partner for a long time if no other course is being accredited, or the geographical distance is too great.
- Concern is being voiced about the amount of time and lack of funding available for partnership meetings – some institutions offer support, others leave staff to fulfil the requirements in their own time and at their own expense.
- The partnership scheme objectives are not clear. If it involves monitoring how should that be done. Does it invite courses to spy on one another, or to collude?

1997 Report

This report was very different in format from the previous one. In her interview, the co-ordinator did point out that this was deliberate on her part, because:

‘I wanted to pick out what is happening in courses and what they say about recommendations. I have not focused on the content of the meetings between partners. It is more interesting to note the changes which have happened and what is said, or not said, about recommendations.’

The report listed the accredited courses and under each one gave dates of when they met with their partner, detailed what they had done to address the conditions and/or recommendations, imposed when the course was accredited, and outlined any staff or course changes. The detail under each course depended upon what had been written and in many instances, the conditions and recommendations had been implemented a number of years previously.

This report was more descriptive than analytical. It would have been more useful if a comparison was made with the previous year's report and an overview about the effectiveness of the scheme offered. Although it is important to address conditions and recommendations and any changes, they do not facilitate the scheme's development.

Summary

An important feature of the findings is that the respondents have similar views about the scheme and its worth. Although they see the need for developing it, possibly without the monitoring aspect, they all recognise the benefits that can be derived from working with another accredited course. Furthermore, the interviews and documentary analysis were useful places to start this research. They informed the survey framework and, together with the survey findings and the literature review, highlighted areas for further development in the case studies.

Chapter 5

PRESENTATION OF SURVEY FINDINGS

The questionnaire (Appendix 5) was sent to course leaders from the whole population of accredited courses who, by March 1998, were actively involved in the partnership scheme, 38 in total. Five of them took part in both the pilot survey and case studies. Of the remaining thirty-three, twenty-seven responded to the questionnaire. This meant that there was an 81 percent response rate to the questionnaire and an 84 percent total response rate – as illustrated by Table 5.1:

Table 5.1

Survey Response Rate

	% of total
Pilot/Case Study	14
Respondent	70
Non-Respondent	16

A number of substantial changes were made to the questionnaire, following the pilot, therefore findings from the pilot study are included in chapter six (Case Studies) as all pilot respondents are also case study participants.

The questionnaire comprised 33 questions, some of which had several parts, and was divided into four sections, each of which related to an aspect of the partnership scheme: Structure; Purpose; Process and Outcome. There was a mixture of open and closed questions, depending on the type of information being sought.

Structure

Questions in this section were designed to elicit general details about each institution and the type of course offered. Institutions were private, higher education, further education or not-for profit. Table 5.2 illustrates the institutional type:

Table 5.2

Institution Type

	% of total
Higher Education	38
Private	27
Further Education	15
Charity	12
Voluntary Organisation	4
Educational Trust	4

Counselling courses, at all institutions, were offered on a part-time basis, with the exception of eight percent which offered both full and part-time. The courses were all classified as either 'diploma' or 'advanced diploma'. Within this categorisation twelve percent were promoted as being at masters level, although they were classed as 'diploma' and not 'advanced diploma'.

Staff numbers ranged from 0 - 4 full-time and 2 - 52 part-time. 62 percent of courses had both full and part-time staff (see table 5.3) and the rest had only part-time (see table 5.4).

Table 5.3

Staffing – Full-Time and Part-Time

Numbers	% Full-Time and Part-Time
0 – 5	23
6 – 10	23
11 – 20	12
20+	4

Table 5.4

Staffing – Part-Time Only

	% Part-Time
0 - 5	15
6 - 10	19
11 - 20	4
20 +	0

Although the scheme states that the normal period for a partnership is five years, the Courses Accreditation Management Group (CAMG) agreed to consider requests to extend, or change, a partnership. This accounts, therefore, for the data in table 5.5, which shows that 27 percent of courses had been established for more than five years:

Table 5.5

Duration of Partnership

Number of Years	% Number of Courses
0 – 2	27
3 – 5	46
6 – 8	27

Course leaders classified their course in terms of its core theoretical model (see Table 5.6):

Table 5.6

Core Theoretical Model

	% Number of Courses
Person Centred	50
Psychodynamic	27
Integrative	23

Of these courses, 35 percent were partnered with a course of a similar core theoretical model.

Purpose

This section was designed to examine the purpose of the scheme and to elicit how effective it is in achieving its purpose. The first question asked the respondents what they understood to be the purpose of the partnership scheme. Answers from course leaders were fairly similar, falling within the criteria contained in Table 5.7:

Table 5.7

Purpose of the Partnership Scheme

	% Number of Courses
Meet BAC Requirements	23
Support/Mentoring	81
Monitoring	54
Course Development	31
Personal Development	23
Assisting in Re-accreditation	12

The remaining questions addressed the areas identified in Table 5.7, in terms of usefulness. Under each question respondents were able to comment in more detail on the usefulness of that particular aspect.

BAC Requirements

The usefulness of this aspect of the scheme was recognised by respondents from all institutional types, (see Table 5.8), although those from HE and FE were more disposed to rating it 'very useful' (43 percent) than those from outside the statutory education sector (33 percent).

Table 5.8

Addressing BAC Recommendations/Conditions

	% Number of Courses
Very Useful	35
Useful	27
Fairly Useful	8
Of Limited Use	15
Not Useful	15
No Answer	0

54 percent of course leaders responded in the comments section. The points made were mainly positive, highlighting the benefit of being able to discuss the implementation of, sometimes complex, recommendations and conditions with another course team:

‘We have discussed thoroughly all BAC recommendations and their implementation.’

‘Useful in learning of other course’s responses to requirements and stimulate discussion and thinking about different ways of doing things.’

‘It has been useful to learn how another course manages complex situations.’

It was pointed out, however, that it is not easy to monitor the implementation of recommendations and conditions:

‘I think it is a very difficult task to monitor each other’s courses in terms of what the partnership scheme requires i.e. fulfilment of course conditions.’

Support/Mentoring

This was another favourably received aspect, as illustrated in Table 5.9, although in this instance 75 percent of course leaders from the private and not-for-profit organisations found it ‘very useful’, compared with 36 percent those from HE and FE. This could be due to the fact that many of the private and not for profit organisations are small, single institutions, that do not have any support mechanisms, unlike those in the statutory sector.

Table 5.9

Supporting/Mentoring Each Other

	% Number of Courses
Very Useful	35
Useful	35
Fairly Useful	8
Of Limited Use	15
Not Useful	8
No Answer	0

50 percent of the respondents commented about support/mentoring. This aspect of the scheme is mostly favourably received and course teams have found the support available extremely valuable:

‘This aspect of the partnership has increased in terms of benefits over the past 18 months and we now find the support of our partnership colleagues valuable and enriching.’

‘Helpful to know another course and their staff and to know they will be an available resource when or if needed in this capacity.’

A number of course leaders found that having a partner with a different theoretical model enhanced support:

‘This has been excellent. We have got on well together and there has been a lot of good will – enhanced by offering different core models.’

It was also suggested that further benefits were obtained by having a different perspective put on issues:

‘The discussion with the partner course is useful in exploring issues involving both staff teams’ experience of the courses. The different perspectives provide valuable insight.’

It was also highlighted, however, that time and distance hampered the usefulness of this aspect of the scheme:

‘Because of distance and course timings, we have not been as active as, in a perfect world, we could have been. Contact, when made, has always seemed supportive.’

‘Although we’ve been limited in the times we’ve been able to meet, we found the exchange of ideas and practice useful.’

Monitoring

Monitoring was not considered as useful as the previous aspects (see Table 5.10), particularly in the case of HE and private institutions, where only ten percent and 14 percent, respectively, of course leaders assessed it as ‘very useful’. This contrasted with FE (50 percent) and not-for-profit (40 percent), where ratings were much higher.

Table 5.10

Monitoring Each Other’s Course

	% Number of Courses
Very Useful	19
Useful	19
Fairly Useful	35
Of Limited Use	12
Not Useful	12
No Answer	4

54 percent of respondents chose to comment about monitoring. Many of the comments highlighted the difficulties associated with monitoring within this context. Course leaders found that the infrequency of meetings, amount of time available and type of relationship does not lend itself to monitoring in any depth:

‘We have not had adequate time and staff availability to devote to this.’

‘Infrequent meetings lessens this..... When we do meet time feels too limited to cover enough aspects in depth.’

‘The relationship is probably not close enough to provide ‘in depth’ monitoring but the stimulation and sharing of problems helps.’

‘We have more than enough to do in running our own course.’

Furthermore, it was felt that BAC did not make the monitoring function explicit in the partnership guidelines:

‘The monitoring function seems rather unclear, especially the boundaries of what a course should do if they have grave reservations about their partner.’

‘I think we discuss rather than monitor.’

Course Development

Although seen as generally useful (see Table 5.11), there were marked differences between the institutions. Whereas only ten percent of HE respondents and 14 percent of those from private institutions viewed this as ‘very useful’, 60 percent of not-for-profit and 50 percent of FE did so.

Table 5.11

Encouraging Course Development

	% Number of Courses
Very Useful	23
Useful	38
Fairly Useful	12
Of Limited Use	15
Not Useful	12
No Answer	0

Course leaders highlighted the benefits of this function, finding the discussions most valuable:

‘The discussions and exchange of ideas and information have been very creative.’

‘Consideration of future developments provides a valuable exchange of views and support for ongoing development.’

The benefit of discussing ideas with a course team from a different theoretical model was also mentioned:

‘Sharing of ideas, particularly because our partner offers a different model, was helpful and interesting.’

‘It has provided a place outside of our own course culture to ‘try out’ ideas.’

One course leader did not engage in any course development, nor did they think it viable:

‘We’re not able to meet often enough to do that and I, personally, would be concerned that it could seem very patronising.’

Personal Development

Over 50 percent of respondents did not recognise the usefulness of this aspect of the scheme (see Table 5.12). Course leaders from 80 percent of not-for-profit and 60 percent of HE institutions described it as being ‘of limited use’ or ‘not useful’, as did those from 50 percent of FE and 43 percent of private institutions. Respondents from 29 percent of private, 20 percent of not-for-profit, and ten percent of HE institutions regarded the personal development aspect of the scheme as ‘very useful’.

Table 5.12

Encouraging Personal Development for Course Teams

	% Number of Courses
Very Useful	15
Useful	12
Fairly Useful	15
Of Limited Use	27
Not Useful	31
No answer	0

Course leaders again found problems with time, availability and finance particularly inhibiting:

‘The meetings have provided an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and discussion of issues...However, limited financial resources are, as ever, a limiting factor.’

‘It is difficult for whole teams to meet up and our liaison has tended to be one-to-one.’

‘(courses) are 160 miles apart which does mean that it is difficult for complete teams to meet and exchange views...’

Some respondents also felt that personal development should not be a function of the partnership scheme:

‘I wouldn’t regard this as my business. Again it would feel highly patronising and raise issues of value on which we might agree to differ.’

‘Not really needed.’

Nevertheless, some did find it valuable:

‘Sharing of course issues and staff issues enables open discussion of personal development areas for staff.’

Re-accreditation

Only 35 percent of courses had actually been through the re-accreditation process (see Table 5.13). This led to a large percentage of non-responses, although some course leaders did answer, in anticipation of the event:

‘We are about to have a meeting to discuss this. I anticipate it will be very useful.’

Table 5.13

Assisting in Re-accreditation

	% Number of Courses
Very Useful	23
Useful	12
Fairly Useful	4
Of Limited Use	0
Not Useful	12
No Answer	50

Of those who responded, 100 percent of not-for-profit, 50 percent of HE and FE and 40 percent of private institutions rated it ‘very useful’. The comments reflected this, and were extremely positive, highlighting the supportive and valuable nature of the assistance:

‘Useful to have an outside view or overview as the gradual developments over the years become less obvious to those who are part of the course on a day to day basis.’

‘Appreciated support.’

‘Both (courses) were very active in the re-accreditation process, helped by the fact both had done careful recording of events.’

‘We helped and supported each other’s re-accreditation submissions.’

Process

This section examined the effectiveness of the partnership scheme, from establishing a partnership to maintaining it. This involved assessing the contribution made by BAC and the partner.

Courses Accreditation Management Group (CAMG) Support

Course leaders were asked to rate the support from the CAMG partnership co-ordinator (see Table 5.14).

Table 5.14

Support from CAMG Partnership Co-ordinator

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	8
Good	27
Fair	4
Poor	19
Very Poor	4
No Answer	38

Of the 62 percent who answered this question (see Table 5.14), 35 percent of them commented about it. A further 27 percent, who had not answered the question, also commented. Responses were varied. Some comments positive:

‘I didn’t know what to expect, but found it satisfactory...’

‘Efficient and understanding.’

and others more critical:

‘It was a considerable time before a partner was allocated and we had to remind CAMG that we had not yet got a partner, via an inadequately completed report.’

A number of respondents were not aware that support was available from the partnership co-ordinator:

‘There was none, but we did not need or expect there to be.’

‘Was not aware of any.’

Meetings

The next five questions examined the number and type of meetings courses had with their partner. Course leaders were asked how many meetings they have per year, and to give details of any exceptions to the pattern over the last three years (see Table 5.15):

Table 5.15

Meetings Per Year

	% Number of Courses
1	42
2	38
3	20

Exceptions to the above pattern were due mainly to illness or organisational pressures.

Course leaders were also asked to specify the number of staff and students involved in the meetings (see Tables 5.16 and 5.17) and to give details of any exceptions to this over the last three years.

Table 5.16

Number of Staff Involved in Meetings

	% Number of Courses
1 – 2	19
3 – 6	58
7 +	15
No Answer	8

Table 5.17

Number of Students Involved in Meetings

	% Number of Courses
0	35
1 – 5	8
6 – 9	8
10 +	37
No Answer	12

Variations to the above occurred for several reasons, including: illness, meetings happening out of term time, fewer students than normal on a course, partner's resistance to involving students and course pressures.

Difficulties experienced in arranging these meetings included:

- finding a common meeting time – courses have different structures, some run at the weekend, some during the week;
- the distance between partners being too great;
- financial constraints;
- lack of time – due to institutional pressures.

Other Communication

Other types of communication were also examined. Course leaders specified how often, on an annual basis, they:

- exchanged letters;
- spoke on the telephone;
- exchanged course information and curriculum material;
- acted as a complaints mediator;
- engaged in any other activity

The findings from these questions, represented in Tables 5.18, 5.19, 5.20 and 5.21, indicate that a great deal more communication takes place between partners than the minimum specified by the partnership criteria:

Table 5.18

Exchange of Letters

Times Per Annum	% Number of Courses
0	11
1 – 3	42
4 – 6	29
7 +	0
Yes/Unspecified	18

Table 5.19

Telephone Calls

Times Per Annum	% Number of Courses
0	18
1 – 3	24
4 – 6	30
7 +	12
Yes/Unspecified	16

Table 5.20

Exchange of Course Information

Times Per Annum	% Number of Courses
0	24
1 – 3	38
4 – 6	0
7 +	0
Yes/Unspecified	38

Table 5.21

Exchange of Curriculum Material

Times Per Annum	% Number of Courses
0	46
1 – 3	23
4 – 6	0
7 +	0
Yes/Unspecified	31

Most course teams said that they did not undertake the role of complaints mediator, although three course leaders pointed out that they would if the situation arose.

The other types of communication, not covered by the categories, highlighted were: E-mail (one respondent twice); acting as a visiting lecturer (one respondent once); acting as a consultant (two respondents, once each) and offering re-accreditation advice.

Problems and Issues

Course leaders were then asked to identify what general problems and issues, if any, they encountered, which prohibited their partnership from running smoothly. Some respondents mentioned more than one problem, and their responses were similar in nature to those raised in the section relating to organising partnership meetings. In particular the logistical problems of finding enough time and the distance between partners was highlighted. Table 5.22 illustrates the grouping of these:

Table 5.22

Problems/Issues Affecting Smooth
Running of partnership

	% Number of Courses
None	27
Time	31
Distance	19
Unclear of Purpose of partnership	8
Institutional Difficulties	8
Cost	8
Establishing/Maintaining Contact	15

Of those respondents who found no problems, differences between institutional type was apparent. 80 percent of those from not-for-profit institutions did not experience any problems, nor did 30 percent of those from HE and 29 percent of those from the private sector. However, all respondents from FE institutions experienced some kind of difficulty.

There was no institutional bias in relation to the type of difficulties experienced.

Support from BAC

The next four questions related to BAC's involvement with the partnership process. The first two were about the support received from the BAC office and the CAMG partnership co-ordinator (other than when establishing the partnership), in respect of partnership issues, if they had any. The findings are illustrated in Tables 5.23 and 5.24:

Table 5.23

Support from the BAC Office

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	8
Good	12
Fair	12
Poor	4
Very Poor	0
No Answer	64

Very few comments were made in respect of this question, as many course leaders had no contact with the office on these issues. Only one was critical:

‘I faxed the office for clarification about the consultation role of the partnership. The reply was unhelpful and I still don’t know the answer.’

Table 5.24

Support from the CAMG Partnership Co-ordinator

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	4
Good	4
Fair	4
Poor	8
Very Poor	0
No Answer	80

Most course leaders did not need any support from the CAMG partnership co-ordinator. Of the ones who did seek support only one made a comment, which was:

‘I wrote regarding an issue around an assessment report and never received a reply.’

Annual Report Form

The next two questions were about the annual report form, which all courses have to complete. The first of these questions addressed the structure of the report form (see Table 5.25):

Table 5.25

Structure of the Annual Report Form

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	8
Good	42
Fair	23
Poor	4
Very Poor	0
No answer	23

42 percent of the respondents commented about this aspect. Several course leaders made suggestions as to how it could be changed:

‘It is good but could be developed, to include details about recommendations and how they have been responded to.’

‘Would prefer headings supplied and option of word-processing the report. Space on the form is rather limited.’

A number were happy with it:

‘Fine, it’s clear and easy to fill in – especially since I typed it onto a disc.’

‘It’s a useful way of summarising and considering action taken and recommendations made.’

And one course leader was particularly unhappy with it

‘This is actually the most trying aspect of the partnership stage seeming to require an obsessional degree of checking up.’

The second question asked course leaders to rate the questions in the annual report form (see Table 5.26), and then to qualify this by specifying any questions they would like to see left out and any they would like added. The response to the questions in the report form was positive, of those who answered that question ratings were all either excellent, good or fair.

Table 5.26

Questions in the Annual Report Form

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	8
Good	38
Fair	35
Poor	0
Very Poor	0
No Answer	19

Three course leaders commented about those questions they would like left out. One suggested that reporting back should be scrapped altogether; another suggested that courses should write a report, rather than having to complete a form. The final comment was about why there are difficulties in completing the form rather than questions to be left out.

Only two course leaders made suggestions regarding adding questions:

‘I would like an evaluation of the effectiveness of the scheme included, along with propositions we might make being taken into account.’

‘Make 6(d) a separate question. Break it down and make more specific. Eg: Please specify the recommendations/conditions and state how you have met them. Of course this then needs to be properly monitored.’

Question 6(d) is: Implementation of Conditions and/or Recommendations of BAC Report: (Please give details and an update of progress).

Re-accreditation

The final two questions in this section address re-accreditation, which courses undergo after they have been accredited for five years. When a course is due to be re-accredited, their partner is required to write a report about them and offer support throughout the process.

The first question assessed the involvement of courses’ partner (see Table 5.27):

Table 5.27

Partner’s Involvement

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	15
Good	20
Fair	0
Poor	0
Very Poor	0
No Answer	65

Only 35 percent of courses had undergone re-accreditation at the time of the survey, hence the high percentage not answering the question. The responses

shown in Table 5.27 and the comments were extremely positive, highlighting how supportive and constructive partners were:

‘Staff visited our courses and talked to students. Made very useful and constructive criticisms and suggestions. Supportive validation of strengths and positive encouragement. Useful report.’

‘Tremendous mutual support.’

One course leader mentioned the difficulty they experienced, and the way in which their partner supported them:

‘We had difficulties due to the partnership forms not having been monitored by CAMG. Our partners were very helpful and read our draft re-submission and wrote a letter of support.’

The final question in this section assessed the content of the report sent by the partner for re-accreditation (see Table 5.28):

Table 5.28

Content of Partner's Report

	% Number of Courses
Excellent	20
Good	12
Fair	0
Poor	0
Very Poor	0
No Answer	68

As mentioned, in the previous question, the low response rate is due to the low percentage of courses having gone through re-accreditation. However, as Table 5.28 shows, those who did respond were very positive about this aspect. The

comments were also positive, demonstrating the usefulness of the partner's involvement in re-accreditation:

‘Fair, constructive criticism and validation of strengths. Useful comments and criticism of some of our literature.’

‘Very supportive and helpful.’

Outcomes

This section of the questionnaire addressed the perceived outcomes of the partnership, in terms of intrinsic value and the benefits and disadvantages of the scheme.

Value

The first two questions were designed to ascertain the value in terms of the time and effort involved and the financial cost (see Tables 5.29 and 5.30):

Table 5.29

Value in Terms of Time and Effort

	% Number of Courses
Very High	15
High	30
Fairly High	15
Low	20
Very Low	5
No Answer	15

Although 60 percent of course leaders valued the scheme in terms of time and effort, they also voiced their concerns, particularly in relation to the difficulties of time, distance and finance:

‘When we do overcome obstacles and get together we feel the mutual benefit is great.’

‘Both courses are committed to the partnership scheme and to CAMG. However, external pressures, time and distance make it difficult to meet as often as we would want. Also I think both courses would give more input to each others courses if we were nearer geographically.’

‘Because of the pressures under which both courses’ staff operate we have agreed to restrict our actual meetings to one per year, but to make telephone and/or letter contact whenever either courses’ staff wish to do so.’

‘Useful to see another approach, but costs a lot in time and money.’

Table 5.30

Value in Terms of Financial Cost

	% Number of Courses
Very High	15
High	28
Fairly High	28
Low	15
Very Low	4
No Answer	10

Some of the comments made by course leaders, in respect of this question, did not tie up with the rating they gave. For example, a course leader who rated the scheme ‘very high’, in terms of value in relation to financial cost, commented that:

‘Loss of a day’s work runs into several hundred pounds loss for the organisation.’

However, the comments themselves were useful, as many of them highlighted how prohibitive the cost can be:

‘The main cost is staff hours as it is unfair to ask part time staff to use their own time even though the meetings are valuable. This means that meetings are costly in terms of hours and does mean a limiting factor is imposed on numbers of staff attending.’

‘Money is a problem. Counselling courses make tiny margins and we are constantly under threat.’

‘Cost is covered by my Institute but the partnership course, which is private, does have financial problems.’

‘As we are a private institute, time and travel is paid for by individuals concerned.’

Core Theoretical Model/Institution Type

The remaining questions were open. The first few addressed the relative merits of being partnered with a course of a similar (or different) core theoretical model, and of being partnered with a course from a similar (or different) institutional background.

Core Theoretical Model

Different Model

65 percent of the courses were partnered with a course of a different core theoretical model. The perceived benefits of this were all fairly similar. Course leaders considered it to be useful because:

‘It challenges our assumptions and value system, which is healthy.’

It was also acknowledged that, although curriculum detail could not be addressed, the partnership provided the forum for course teams to discuss other issues, from a different perspective:

‘To see how similar problems, especially evaluation of students’ personal development, are responded to in a course with such a different orientation.’

‘Although we have not been helped much with course content, we have received a lot of help with structuring, e.g. assessments, ethical issues and recruitment. We have also received a lot of feedback which has added to our confidence about the standards we work to.’

In respect of the disadvantages of being partnered with a course of a different orientation, 38 percent of respondents found there were no disadvantages. The issues arising for the remaining respondents centred mainly on the fact that it was not possible to discuss curriculum matters and the implementation of skills training:

‘We cannot exchange theoretical and skills training ideas as fully as we might like.’

‘Can’t discuss many aspects of curriculum, client work or therapy.’

There were also comments made which suggested that the disadvantages were a little more deep-rooted:

‘We may wish to challenge aspects of the partner’s course, but the challenge gets somewhat lost in discussions of the partner’s model and how the relevant issues are understood from their core model.’

‘It is difficult to separate the person from the model. Our partner co-ordinator approaches things in a very different manner and sometimes I feel we speak different languages.’

‘Lack of mutual understanding.’

Similar Model

35 percent of the courses were partnered with similar core theoretical models. The perceived benefits were all fairly similar, based on sharing a similar language, and philosophical base:

They understand our thinking but may have different practice or experience from which we can learn.’

‘As the central element of theory is something we have in common we can more fully discuss ways of delivering the various parts of the course and can share ideas and approaches.’

‘We have the same underlying ideas. There is no need to explain everything. This leads to grasping and understanding the key issues quickly.’

Only 19 percent of course leaders found any disadvantages from being partnered with a course that is similar in orientation. These centred on the propensity for collusion and the possible lack of challenge:

‘Lack of widening of approach and thinking. Loss of opportunity to integrate different ideas and approaches.’

‘At times, may not be challenging enough... There may be a danger of collusion.’

‘Perhaps we minimise the theoretical and practical differences.’

‘Perhaps it leads to staff making assumptions about the other course without teasing the issues out.’

Institutional Type

69 percent of the courses have partners operating in a different organisational context. The benefits of this situation are seen to be linked to the different learning experiences for students and operating experiences for staff:

‘Enables awareness of different organisational issues and impact/effect on staff and students.’

‘Challenges us to consider different teaching methods.’

‘Opportunities for learning from another’s experience.’

‘Very interesting and challenging in terms of frames of reference. Puts problems we experience in a new perspective, therefore enables us to think through issues in different ways.’

‘Very beneficial. There is something very important in realising the advantages and disadvantages that each have in relation to programme delivery and content.’

38 percent of respondents specified disadvantages of being partnered with a course operating from a different organisational context. These were mainly about lack of understanding:

‘They don’t understand the problems of size.’

‘It takes a little while to appreciate the particular problems that are involved in a different context.’

‘We encounter different problems and can’t always help with solutions based on experience.’

‘Sometimes we don’t always grasp and understand the significance of the differences.’

Those partnered with courses operating in a similar organisational context viewed the benefits as being linked to a shared understanding of the issues faced:

‘We know the constraints that exist for both of us. We can talk on the basis of reality.’

‘We have common ground, challenges, restrictions, demands and can compare notes on ways of conforming to, or opposing, these, if necessary!’

‘Insight into the frustrations of running a course that is within the HE sector. Facing similar problems to each other.’

‘An understanding of organisational/institutional difficulties and restrictions means we are not unrealistic or unsympathetic with each other.’

The disadvantages were felt to be in relation to the possibility of collusiveness and being too introspective:

‘Perhaps we miss the stimulation of seeing innovative work from F.E. institutions.’

‘We share similar views, which could make us blind to shortcomings in each other’s courses.’

‘Can get into collusive commiserating rather than constructive investigation of alternatives. Sometimes an ‘outside’ view can provide new perspectives.’

Over-view

The final two questions were designed for course leaders to take an over-view of the partnership scheme. Firstly they were asked what value they place on the scheme and secondly what improvements they would like to see.

Value

Only four percent of course leaders placed low value on the partnership scheme. The other course leaders were extremely positive about certain aspects of the scheme, although there were doubts about others.

The supportive and developmental nature of the scheme was the most appreciated aspect:

‘In relation to support, learning and on-going personal and professional development, a very high value.’

‘It has been very valuable to have, in this era of assessment and surveillance of performance at all levels, a ‘sister’ organisation, a peer, who understands and supports our efforts, mistakes and achievements.’

‘Sharing/challenging/supportive – is of inestimable value.’

‘Meeting ensures that we continually look at our course and assess it from their perspective. This brings our perspective into greater focus.’

However, the monitoring function was not received so favourably:

‘I think the monitoring side of conditions and recommendations, and changes to the course need to be done centrally by CAMG.’

‘In relation to monitoring there is not enough time to do this in a valid way.’

Some course leaders also felt that they had not taken full advantage of the scheme, for a number of reasons:

‘If the other course was much closer I think that the benefits would be greatly increased.’

‘I think that the potential is great, but that we have yet to realise it.’

‘We could both make more use of it than we are at present.’

One course leader felt that partnerships should be left to develop on their own, without BAC oversight:

‘The scheme is a good idea, but partners need to be left alone to develop it as they wish.’

Improvements

50 percent of course leaders made suggestions to improve the partnership scheme. One of the most common suggestions was for BAC to address the difficulties course teams face, particularly financial constraints and geographical location:

‘It would be much easier if it were nearer.’

‘We would like there to be acknowledgement of the different settings in which counselling training takes place and the difference in availability of finance and resources regarding staffing hours for meetings.’

‘If some additional funding was provided by BAC, there may be more opportunities for more regular meetings. However, pressure of time for attendance at meetings may be a limiting factor.’

It was also suggested that BAC should provide clearer operational guidelines for the partnership scheme, and monitor adherence to them:

‘More clarity around the monitoring function.’

‘There did not seem to be sufficient guidelines on how we should use the scheme.’

‘Better monitoring by CAMG. Many partnerships do not work and these need to be effectively monitored and if necessary challenged - as courses who do not keep BAC/CAMG requirements undermine the scheme and its standards.’

In respect of the criteria stating that partnerships should last no longer than five years, it was suggested that:

‘partnerships should be allowed to stay together over a significant period of time, as much of the learning comes as a result of knowing each other well.’

Furthermore, it was felt that the scheme should recognise, more formally, the developmental outcomes:

‘There is a case for it being a part of on-going professional development.’

Summary

The main points arising from the survey can be presented thematically. In terms of being fit for purpose, certain aspects of the partnership scheme were deemed more useful than others. Support/mentoring and assisting re-accreditation were viewed as being particularly useful. Addressing BAC recommendations/conditions and course development were also viewed positively. However, neither monitoring nor personal development were particularly well regarded. The main difficulties course leaders found in the maintenance of a satisfactory partnership, were the geographical location of the partnered courses, and the cost involved, in terms of time and finance.

The findings also illustrate that there is not an ideal partnership combination. When questioned about the difficulties of being partnered with a course from a different core theoretical model, over two thirds of courses experienced none. Similarly, many courses partnered with a course from a similar theoretical model also did not experience any difficulties. Furthermore, being partnered with a course from a different, or similar, institutional type did not appear to make any difference. Benefits and problems appeared to cross the boundaries.

Finally, despite reservations about certain aspects, all but one of the course leaders felt that the scheme was valuable in its own right.

Chapter 6

CASE STUDIES

Introduction

Five case studies were undertaken, in order to provide a more in depth analysis of the partnership scheme. Four of the five took part in the pilot survey and one in the final survey. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, one of the original case study courses decided to withdraw from the research, having reviewed the interview notes, which meant finding a replacement.

Of the five courses, three came from the statutory sector (higher education) and two from the non-statutory sector (not-for-profit). Two institutional types are not represented, further education and private. None of the further education institutions would agree to take part, and it was not possible to replace the private sector course that withdrew with another from that sector.

A combination of research methodologies was used in each case study.

Documentary analysis on the past three annual report forms was carried out, although in some cases only two were available. The pilot survey was also used in four of the case studies and the final survey findings for the replacement case study. Semi-structured interviews were also undertaken with each course leader and other team members (depending on availability).

In two of the case studies, joint face-to-face interviews were undertaken, because of the limited amount of time available. In two of the remaining case studies, interviews were conducted separately. In the last case study (the replacement one) three separate interviews were undertaken on the telephone. More detail of each is to be found in Chapter 3.

Case Study 1

This institution's course was awarded accredited status in 1994. It was partnered with a course for two and a half years, at which time the partner course closed. It was without a partner for eighteen months and has just been allocated a new one.

The institution and their partner are both from higher education. The courses are both single core theoretical models, the case study course is psychodynamic and the partner was person-centred.

The course has one full time member of staff and one on a 0.8 contract. As core staff they are supported by three group facilitators, who are included in course planning and meet on a termly basis, and a team of supervisors, who also meet termly. The group facilitators support the students in their studies and the supervisors take clinical responsibility for the practice element of the course.

Partnership Reports

Two annual report forms were available, relating to 1996 and 1997. These reports identified the number of meetings between the two and who was present. There was no established pattern, as each of the three meetings involved a different number of people, including three students at one session.

The initial meeting in 1996 was spent discussing BAC recommendations and their implementation, together with pertinent course issues, for example: the case study course's introduction of an appraisal scheme to supplement the students' personal review journal. The second meeting in 1996 focused on identifying the changes that had happened over recent months. The third, and final, meeting in 1997 was mainly spent discussing the closure of the partner course.

In the section asking for a general comment on the partnership, in the latest report, the course leader wrote that:

‘The two courses are extremely different. This is, on the one hand, refreshing and interesting, and, on the other, challenging in so far as finding a common language/common ground is demanding.’

Pilot Questionnaire

When completing this questionnaire the case study course was without a partner, but the course leader responded retrospectively.

Purpose

When assessing the partnership in terms of its usefulness, in respect of purpose, they found it ‘of limited use’ for addressing BAC recommendations and offering support, and ‘not useful’ for providing a mentor, promoting development and monitoring.

Process

They also found difficulties in setting up meetings:

‘They were in London, so it was a whole day affair.
It was very difficult to fit this in with commitments
to students.’

Furthermore, they felt that support from the BAC office was very poor:

‘I wrote in my last report that we had no partner and were
still waiting for a replacement. Heard nothing back, ever.’

Value

When asked to rate the partnership in terms of value, it was rated ‘very poor’ for time, cost and effort.

Outcome

The answer given to the questions relating to the benefits and disadvantages of being partnered with a course of a different core theoretical model contradicts what was written, and quoted above, in the partnership report:

‘I could not see any benefits’

and in respect of disadvantages:

‘different language, structures, thinking – worlds apart.’

When asked for suggestions to improve the scheme, the course leader thought that partnerships should be local and partners from the same, or similar, core theoretical model.

Overall Opinion

When asked what value was placed on the scheme for the course and team, the course leader stated:

‘Not a lot at present. I’d need an experience of it that was not more trouble/effort than it was worth...I could not see what they (partner) could realistically offer, or what we could offer them.’

Interview

A joint interview was undertaken with the two core staff. One is course leader and the other (team member) used to be course leader and is involved in the BAC Courses Accreditation Management Group and, therefore, has a more intimate knowledge of the accreditation process and the partnership scheme.

Purpose

They were both critical of the monitoring function, particularly as they already have internal monitoring processes. The course leader felt that:

‘It wasn’t effective because of the difference between the courses. They were like chalk and cheese. Also we didn’t see each other long enough to make any sense of what goes on.’

The team member also commented on the fact that, although monitoring is part of the scheme, issues mentioned in the annual report are not taken up. She felt that:

‘partners should be able to pick up concerns. The problem, at present, however, is there are no sanctions available.’

In terms of support, both felt that they did not need support, because of the supportive nature of the team and that if they had any problems they would use a course consultant. However, the partner course used the team member for support:

‘Our partner course used (team member) for personal support when their course was failing. We wouldn’t use them...’

They felt that this support was requested because the team member and the partner’s course leader got on well together. Personalities played an important part.

Neither felt that the scheme offered any course or personal development. The course leader felt that:

‘The partnership is more like a reporting procedure – just like the partnership report.’

Process

Trying to establish the partnership proved problematic. The team member (who was course leader at that time) made endless telephone calls and sent a number of letters and e-mails, in order to arrange the first meeting. She did:

‘all the running.’

The first meeting was eventually fixed after being partnered for just over one year. It took so long:

‘because of the course. The only possible free day was Friday and our partner ran its course on that day.’

Distance between the courses was also a factor. As the course leader said:

‘It would be easier if we were closer.’

Partnership Features

Trust

The course leader did not have any real involvement in the first place and felt that trust wasn’t established. The team member trusted the partner’s course leader on a personal level but felt that there were:

‘difficulties in establishing trust because we didn’t meet often enough.’

Furthermore, the team member believed that:

‘like the therapeutic alliance, you must be committed and motivated. Because it was imposed this was problematic.’

Relationships

Both thought there could be potential problems, although they did not encounter any. The team member is, however, currently on a reaccreditation panel where a course leader is refusing to write a report because of lack of co-operation from their partner:

‘a case where monitoring has met with resistance and opposition.’

They both thought, however, that because the partnership involves both monitoring and support this:

‘could produce ongoing tension.’

Communication

Both felt that communication was one way. The team member made an effort to communicate because she was:

‘motivated by allegiance to the scheme.’

Otherwise she would not have bothered to keep in contact.

Conflicts

They did not experience any conflict with the partner, other than what has already been mentioned in terms of communication and setting up the first meeting. However, there was a conflict between BAC requirements and those of the institution in which the case study course was based. BAC expected more support to be given to students on work placement than the institution would generally allow.

Furthermore, the course leader repeatedly asked CAMG for a new partner, once their partner’s course closed, and was not given one for two years.

Annual Report Form

Both interviewees felt that the form was useful because it allowed for a focus on course changes and complaints. However, concern was expressed about what use is made of the reports:

‘Sometimes things on the reports aren’t taken up.’

The team member also took issue with the question regarding implementing conditions and recommendations:

‘This doesn’t need to be repeated each year.’

This led her to further comment that:

‘BAC shouldn’t treat everyone in counselling as if they’re trainees. We need a professional association for professional practitioners.’

Overview

Neither interviewee wished the partnership scheme to continue in its present form. The team member suggested that there should be a system of self-audit, requiring courses to provide an annual report detailing any changes:

‘An internal auditing system with some form of external verification from a link person at BAC would be better. Providing the system is flexible and the criteria aren’t set too rigidly, in order to allow for it to be developmental.’

The course leader thought a support network group would be useful, as long as it wasn’t made compulsory:

‘Some courses would find it more useful than others, depending on the institution and how long they have been operating.’

Case Study 2

This institution’s course was awarded accredited status in 1991. The course has been with the same partner for over six years. The case study course operates from a private institution, with charitable status, and their partner is from higher education. The courses both subscribe to the same single core theoretical model, person-centred.

The case study course has no full-time staff, although the course leader is on a 0.8 contract and the course co-ordinator on 0.5. There are a further eleven tutors who are self-employed and work, on average, 18 hours per month.

Partnership Reports

Two of the past three reports were available, relating to 1996 and 1997. In 1996 there were two meetings, both involving three staff and no students. In 1997 the courses met three times. The first involved six staff and no students; the second five staff and no students; the third three staff and 17 students.

During 1996 the main focus of discussion was the case study course’s re-accreditation and the requirement for a report from their partner. However, the course leader was unhappy about the outcome, and in the general comment on partnership section she stated that:

‘I was disappointed at the length of time it took (partner) to write their report for our re-accreditation document. I also was concerned about how brief it was.’

They also discussed course issues, in particular supervision for students, and both courses voiced their concern about the level of 'policing' by BAC since the comedian Bernard Manning managed to illicitly become a member, which resulted in an immense amount of media coverage.

During 1997 the focus was on the partner's re-accreditation, changes in the case study course (from a diploma to a degree), staffing changes, and course issues.

In the general comment on partnership, the new course co-ordinator requested a change of partner:

'Following the re-accreditation process of (partner) it would seem a good time to seek/develop links with a new partner.'

Pilot Questionnaire

Purpose

The course leader found the scheme was 'of limited use' for addressing BAC recommendations, offering support, providing a mentor, promoting development and monitoring activity. She made one positive comment:

'Certain issues, e.g. placements, were useful to explore.'

Process

Course leaders experienced difficulties when organising meetings, because of participants' other commitments. This was dealt with pragmatically:

'Course leaders agree a date and then whoever else can make it attends.'

The support received from the CAMG partnership co-ordinator and the BAC office was assessed as being fair. Although in respect of the partnership co-ordinator:

‘There is a problem of communication. (We) do not always receive requested information or consultation, even after a letter.’

The annual report form was viewed as ‘good’ in terms of its structure and the questions asked.

As previously mentioned, the partner’s involvement in the re-accreditation process was criticised, particularly regarding the content and the time it took to submit their report.

‘There was frustration in the length of time it took.’

Value

The partnership was not viewed favourably in terms of value:

‘The current partnership has been of little value and takes up valuable time.’

Furthermore:

‘The time and effort involved is not rewarded currently in terms of support/learning gained.’

Outcome

It was felt that potentially there could be some benefits of being partnered with a course of the same core theoretical model. The possibility exists for sharing knowledge. It also gives the opportunity to network, to facilitate an exploration of how to deliver the curriculum:

‘and respond to market forces, whilst maintaining philosophical principles.’

The disadvantages of such a pairing were thought to be competition, the potential for collusion and an inability to see differences between the two courses.

A number of suggestions were made, which could improve the current scheme. Several of these related to the supportive function, particularly that BAC should provide clearer guidelines as to the partnership role and provide more support when a partnership is not working.

It was also suggested that there should be some financial help:

‘If staff and students are expected to be involved, then financial remuneration is important. As it stands, staff cannot see the value in giving up time.’

Overall Opinion

As a scheme, the course leader felt that, potentially, it had value. She based this view on her experience of a previous partnership. However, in this instance the partnership is not successful:

‘The partnership is of little value, which is a shame. I think this is connected to the difference in contact/awareness of BAC and the morale in our partner’s institution.’

Interview

The course leader was interviewed on her own initially. The course co-ordinator then joined the interview and it continued as a ‘group’. This was the second partnership the course leader had been involved in and she was, therefore, able to make a useful comparison between the two.

Purpose

Both felt that monitoring is problematic, because the limits of responsibility are not made clear by BAC. Furthermore the course leader did not think that it should be the partner's role, particularly in view of the limited amount of time the partners spend together. She believed that:

‘Another course should not be asked to ‘whistle blow’. There are too many other aspects to concentrate on, e.g. networking, development, and the opportunity of seeing different ways/styles of working.’

The supportive nature of the partnership was also criticised. The course co-ordinator did not find the partnership supportive in respect of development. However, she felt it was beneficial on a personal level, because she was able to:

‘see how another course was run, to meet students and view its structure.’

The course leader believed that their partner benefited from the partnership, whereas they did not:

‘They got a lot from the partnership and were very interested in what we were doing. It was very much ‘one-way’ traffic.’

Although the course leader experienced the advantages of staff from different courses meeting, from her previous partnership, she felt it to be of little use in this instance. The course co-ordinator verified this:

‘I wouldn’t ask tutors to go, when they could be getting on with other things. It’s pretty close to a waste of time, particularly when a certain member of their team is there.’

Process

As neither of the interviewees was present at the start of the partnership, they could not comment directly on the process involved, although neither was aware of any problems, from discussions with colleagues.

Partnership Features

Trust

Both felt that trust did not exist between the two partners. The course leader pointed out that:

‘The relationship isn’t there, although it’s not mistrust. Rather there is an absence of trust, because of the quality of contact.

This was blamed, in part, on a certain member of the partner course, which highlights, once again, how personalities can determine the effectiveness of a partnership.

Relationships

The course leader was uneasy with some aspects of the relationship. Their partner could have exercised their power in the past, and informed BAC about problems with the case study course, but they did not. However, the course leader was unable to go along with this principle:

‘I wouldn’t just sit back and watch what was going on, especially if things were seriously wrong.’

Communication

The course leader communicated a lot with her previous partner. With the current one, however, communication was only twice a year (at the meetings).

Conflicts

As previously mentioned, difficulties were experienced in respect of the case study course's re-accreditation. The course co-ordinator reiterated that:

‘Our partner took a long time to write the re-accreditation report, which was very short, and held up the process.’

There have also been problems regarding contact with BAC/CAMG:

‘We have written twice to BAC asking to change partners, and both times received no response.’

Annual Report Form

The course co-ordinator believes that because BAC is unclear about what the partnership scheme is for, then the form reflects this:

‘BAC needs to clarify what is required and design the form around it.’

The course leader, however, likes the idea of a form, rather than a report because:

‘it gives a structure to work to and helps establish a relationship between the BAC and the course.’

Overview

Neither respondent was convinced that the partnership scheme should continue in its present format. The course leader commented that:

‘If we could choose our partner I would want it to continue. At the moment there is too much coercion.’

The course co-ordinator suggested that BAC should introduce a scheme that enables course teams to feel part of a whole wider community:

‘and something that connects courses to BAC, making them feel that they belong.’

Case Study 3

This institution’s course has been accredited since the middle of 1996. The current partnership has been established since the beginning of 1997. The course leader has previous experience of being partnered with this course in his former capacity as leader of another course.

The case study course is from the higher education sector, whereas, their partner is a charitable, not for profit, institution. Both courses are single core theoretical models, the case study course is person-centred and their partner psychodynamic.

The course does not have any full time staff members. There are four part time staff, two of whom are the current and previous course leader.

Partnership Report

Only one annual report form had been completed, at the time of the research – for 1997. The courses met twice during 1997. The first meeting (at the case study’s institution) involved four staff and twelve students; the second (at the partner’s institution) five staff and 25 students.

The initial meeting focussed on the differences and similarities between the two courses. The second meeting explored this further and also considered the possibility of exchange visits between trainees:

‘Three trainees from (case study course) visited (partner) at the end of January 1998 and found their visit both stimulating and illuminating.’

The report was very positive about the partnership, and in the 'general comment on partnership' section, it was stated that:

'The partnership has been extremely helpful in terms of our understanding of how a different course operates and has already been helpful to our students in their understanding of a different counselling orientation.'

Pilot Questionnaire

Purpose

When assessing the usefulness of the partnership, the course leader rated the support offered as 'useful'; addressing BAC recommendations, promoting development and monitoring 'fairly useful'; and providing a mentor as 'of limited use'.

Process

The main difficulty experienced when organising the meetings is the fact that all participants have:

'overloaded timetables.'

The course leader felt the support received from the CAMG partnership co-ordinator was 'good', and comments about support from the BAC office because:

'no support has been asked for.'

Finally, the annual report form was rated as being 'fair' for both its structure and the questions asked.

Value

The scheme was rated as 'fair' in respect of value for time, cost and effort.

Outcome

The course leader was positive in her response to the questions relating to the benefits and disadvantages of being partnered with a course of a different core theoretical model. When asked about the benefits, she stated that:

'this is useful learning for both staff and students involved.'

Furthermore, when asked about disadvantages, her view was:

'none that I can see at this stage.'

Overall Opinion

When asked about how valuable the scheme is for the course team, the course leader stated that:

'It is valuable in enabling us to see ourselves within a broader training context. The difficulty is in finding the time to make best use of the partnership and the opportunities it provides.'

Interview

The past course leader and a course tutor were interviewed separately. The current course leader, who was unable to be there because of illness, offered her views of the partnership scheme, via the course tutor.

Purpose

There was a positive response to the usefulness of the scheme, in respect of purpose. The past course leader found that it encouraged professional development:

‘If the partner is from a different orientation you can learn about it from the inside, rather than theoretically.’

Furthermore, he viewed the support and guidance offered, particularly in respect of the many common concerns, as invaluable:

‘You can learn a lot about how the course handles issues.’

The course tutor echoed this and further added that:

‘a great deal can come out of the cross fertilisation.’

All three respondents commented about the monitoring function. The past course leader viewed monitoring in this context to be fairly informal, referring to it as ‘friendly monitoring’. He believed this to be beneficial, because it encourages participants to act in a certain way and does not prohibit openness, which a more rigid system of monitoring might. He does qualify this by stating that:

‘Time is needed to build up a relationship that enables effective monitoring.’

He further added that:

‘If you treat the partner like an inspector then it will not happen. Discussions need to be open and frank, so that difficulties can be aired.’

The course tutor did not feel so positive about monitoring. She believed that:

‘monitoring is a sticking point, although it’s almost redundant in terms of this partnership.’

Process

The process ran very smoothly, possibly because a relationship had already been established between some of the participants in the previous partnership.

Partnership Features

Trust

The past course leader was confident that trust exists between the two partners, because of past history. He acknowledged that trust was not present immediately, it had to develop:

‘It was congenial from the beginning, it took about six contacts to develop trust.’

He also recognised the importance of having a relationship built on trust:

‘If you don’t build up trust the partnership could be conflictual and unproductive.’

Relationships

Although the past course leader and course tutor were aware of the potential for a power relationship to develop, they did not experience it in this context. The past course leader believed that this was, in part, due to the fact that they were from different core theoretical models:

‘because the different orientations give each course its own solid terrain, you are not comparing like with like. This moderates some of the power dynamics.’

Furthermore, some of the staff members at both courses are very well established and respected in the counselling field:

‘They are secure in their personal power and reputations, participants have parity of esteem.’

He then commented that there is the potential for this type of relationship to lend itself to being collusive, although:

‘we haven’t wandered off in that direction in any notable way. There can be a danger of collusion, but if partners are from a different orientation it is much less likely.’

Communication

There has been quite a lot of communication between the partners. They meet twice a year for an all day meeting. A student visit was arranged, which proved to be beneficial, as the course tutor pointed out:

‘I taught the students who went to (partner) for a visit. Feedback highlighted that they found it worthwhile.’

The partners also keep in contact throughout the year, either by telephone, post or e-mail.

Conflicts

They did not experience any conflict with the partner, or with BAC. However, the past course leader pointed out that there could be some issues between BAC and the University validation procedures, depending on how the institution values BAC:

‘Our institution regards BAC highly and they are very keen to ensure we are in line with BAC regulations.’

The areas which presents most difficulty is assessment, however, as the past course leader pointed out:

‘when our course was set up it was self and peer assessment with the exam board as a backstop. This needs to be sorted out at the beginning.’

Annual Report Form

None of the respondents had any comments to make about the form, other than the course leader, who found:

‘the paperwork involved tedious and laborious.’

Overview

All the respondents were positive about the scheme, based on their experience of it. The course leader felt that:

‘ overall it is a positive thing and because our partner is from a different orientation it keeps us on our toes.’

The course tutor stated that it is a good thing:

‘because it brings together a broad range of people.’

The past course leader was, however, quite clear that this was to do with the nature of the partnership:

‘If we had a different type of partner we might have felt that we were giving a lot and gaining only a little.’

He also pointed out that logistical difficulties could hamper the development of any partnership:

‘If partners are going to benefit from the scheme they must have experiential knowledge of each other’s courses. This is costly in terms of time and finance.’

He thought that partners could use this cost to justify non-compliance with the scheme:

‘If the will isn’t there to make things work, course teams will use this to knock the scheme on the head.’

Case Study 4

This institution was awarded accredited status in 1990. Their partnership commenced in 1991, in their second year as an accredited course.

The institution is from the higher education sector, and their partner is an educational trust. The courses operate from different theoretical models. The case study course is integrative and their partner psychosynthesis.

The course has four members of staff, two full-time; one on a 0.5 contract and one on a 0.2 contract.

Partnership Reports

Three annual report forms were available, relating to 1995, 1996 and 1997. Meetings took place three times in 1995 and twice in both 1996 and 1997. With the exception of one large meeting (20 staff and 15 students) the meetings were between the two course leaders only, although:

‘other course staff have been involved, informally and usually quite briefly, prior to the formal consultation meeting between the two course leaders.’

The 1995 meetings were primarily concerned with preparations for re-accreditation, which both courses were going through. The course leaders also discussed issues and procedures for external academic validation, which the case study course was planning to do for their partner.

During 1996 course issues were discussed at the first meeting. At the second, very large, all day meeting, course validation was the focus, although:

‘the BAC partnership was a central issue.’

During 1997, the course leaders discussed a number of course issues, together with responses to the re-accreditation reports. They also discussed the future of the partnership, now that the partner course had formally applied to the case study course’s institution for validation of their courses.

In the ‘general comments on partnership’ section the response is positive:

‘(case study course) feels it has gained an enormous amount from the consultative meetings. The support received from the (partner) is valued very highly.’

The course leader also commented on how differences between the courses did not preclude them from experiencing similar difficulties:

‘Despite the very different core theoretical models and contrasting institutional settings it was comforting to share so many common problems.’

In the report relating to 1997, the course leader raised the issue of continuing the partnership now that they are validating their partner’s course:

‘We are aware of the potential issues and possible conflicts, but feel it is too early for us to decide. We would very much like to continue the partnership for a further year and report back.’

He further added:

‘although our courses and organisations are very different we would like the opportunity to explore and use what we now have in common.’

Pilot Questionnaire

Purpose

When assessing the partnership in terms of its purpose, the course leader found it ‘fairly useful’ for addressing BAC recommendations, although he qualified this by stating:

‘I guess this depends on the nature and number of recommendations and conditions. We did not have many.’

He found it ‘useful’ in terms of offering support and ‘very useful’ for promoting development. He was not clear about the mentoring role:

‘Both course leaders have over fifteen years experience. We didn’t see the partnership involving a mentor role.’

He had further difficulties with monitoring, classing it as ‘fairly useful’:

‘Who holds the agenda for monitoring? Who is responsible for what? Monitoring links with addressing BAC recommendations and conditions perhaps, but only with certain conditions.’

Process

There was initial difficulty in setting up meetings and it took two years to establish the partnership. Other problems were also experienced:

‘mainly about pressure of work, increasing levels of administration. Our aim was to satisfy minimum BAC/CAMG requirements. This we did, but the issue was about finding convenient times to meet.’

In respect of support from the CAMG:

‘The chair of CAMG did reply, and was very supportive, to a letter I sent about a particular issue.’

The structure of the annual report form and the questions asked were both viewed as excellent, although the course leader did comment that:

‘It would help if it was on computer and could be e-mailed to us. Also, some sections need more/less space each year.’

The partner’s involvement in re-accreditation, and the content of the report they were sent, was also rated as excellent. The course leader found the partner:

‘Very helpful and supportive. We discussed the re-accreditation submission document in detail and received advice, guidance and challenge, gaining new perspectives.’

Value

When asked to rate the partnership in terms of value, it was rated as excellent for both time and effort:

‘What we do, we do well and has proved an excellent use of time. The effort is well worthwhile.’

Outcome

The course leader did not experience any disadvantages from being partnered with a course of a different core theoretical model. He did, however, find it beneficial, particularly the stimulation of acquiring new perspectives and different ideas.

He also found that having to explain his model to the partner helped to clarify it further in his mind. He did qualify his comments by stating that:

‘I guess it depends on the core model, ours is integrative and ipso facto we welcomed and gained a great deal from working with a partner who has a different model.’

When asked for suggestions to improve the scheme the course leader stated that CAMG should make more explicit their partnership requirements. He also thought that there should be:

‘Clear CAMG policy on whether partnerships can/should continue following re-accreditation.’

Although he did realise that this could prove difficult if partners have to apply for re-accreditation in different years. He also suggested that CAMG should make:

‘some response to issues raised in the annual report form.’

Overall Opinion

When asked what value he placed on the scheme, the course leader stated that:

‘It is essential for the re-accreditation process/procedures. Otherwise, it is a very useful and worthwhile exercise. But it is what we made it!’

Interview

The two full-time members of staff were interviewed together, the course leader and a course tutor.

Purpose

The course leader finds the partnership relationship very supportive and most meetings, which are mainly between the two course leaders, start with a discussion of 'moans and groans, or current problems and issues'.

He also believes that monitoring/evaluation is the key to re-accreditation. Both course leaders discussed problems and how to deal with them. He felt that it:

'works well because of the level of mutual respect and maturity of the two courses.'

Both interviewees were positive about the professional development the partnership engendered; the course leader commented that:

'We talk about why and how we do things, if they are different it can be challenging and thought provoking.'

The course tutor stated that:

'It's nice to go outside of ones own patch. Having to explain the situation so they understand it is challenging.'

Process

It took a long time for the course to establish itself in the scheme. Initially they were not allocated a partner, and when they finally had one there were difficulties in arranging the first meeting.

Partnership Features

Trust

After two meetings the course leader felt that an element of trust had developed, that enabled them to:

‘openly discuss problems and issues, check out any problems and keep things confidential.’

He believed this was tied up with respect.

The course tutor, although only knowing the partner’s course leader and senior tutor, also felt:

‘free to discuss anything, which is down to the maturity of the course and its leader.’

Relationships

Both felt that there is an issue of power, because of the nature of the discussions, which has potential for abuse. Although, as the course leader pointed out:

‘We trust our partner. They are in a powerful position and could disclose confidential material. If that happened, however, the partnership couldn’t continue.’

It was suggested that there could be an element of collusion, rather than power:

‘opportunities for collusion could arise in, for example, the area of complaints, but it doesn’t feel as if it does.’

Communication

Once established, the communication between the partners was two-way, comprising not only regular meetings but also four to five telephone calls each year and the exchange of relevant material.

Conflicts

Initially, because of the difficulty in getting the partnership established, conflict was experienced. Differences of opinion were also experienced in respect to philosophical issues. The course leader commented that:

‘We respect their views, but don’t necessarily agree with them. Some of the differences are to do with having a different core theoretical model.’

Annual Report Form

Both respondents thought this was fine, the course tutor stated that:

‘It monitors all those things that need monitoring, although it would be useful if it was put on disc.’

Overview

Both felt positive about the partnership, although they did comment about certain areas. The course tutor believed that the scheme needs to be co-ordinated better. Furthermore, he felt that:

‘BAC isn’t clear about the objectives of the partnership scheme, and needs to address the monitoring/review/evaluation role.’

The course leader responded to this by stating that:

‘If the monitoring function is taken out of the partnership scheme, it is important to try and tie monitoring in with other quality assurance procedures used by institutions.’

He also thought that in some instances partnership activity could just be a paper exercise, to satisfy BAC requirements:

‘particularly if you don’t trust or respect your partner.’

His main concern was that if BAC is planning to make any changes they should take account of what organisations already do.

Case Study 5

This institution’s course was awarded accredited status in 1989 and was re-accredited in 1994. The first partnership expired because their partner’s course closed. The new partnership has been in existence for eighteen months, although one member of their previous partnered course is with the new one.

The case study course is a charity and their partner is from higher education. They are both single core theoretical models, the case study course is psychodynamic and their partner person-centred.

The course has one full time member of staff and 52 part time. The part-time staff includes two core staff plus seminar leaders, supervisors (of clinical practice) and group conductors (who facilitate student work groups). These staff support 115 students.

Partnership Reports

One annual report form was available, relating to 1997. The report outlined details of the two meetings that had taken place. Both meetings involved students and staff, meeting one had four staff and twelve students, meeting two had five staff and twenty-five students.

The initial meeting focused on discussions relating to the common areas of difficulty, particularly:

‘establishing boundaries round personal counselling and in staff/student relationships.’

The second meeting was spent discussing the theoretical model of each course, noting differences and points of interest.

The course leader was positive about the partnership’s potential outcome, and in the ‘general comment on partnership’ section wrote:

‘This is a new partnership but we see it already bearing fruit, both for us at a staff level and for the trainees. We will, I hope, benefit greatly from trying to see ourselves from the other’s perspective and from seeing what the other model offers.’

Questionnaire

This course replaced the one that withdrew from the case study research, therefore, the questionnaire completed was not the pilot, but the final version.

Purpose

When assessing the partnership in terms of its usefulness, in respect of purpose, the course leader rated it as ‘useful’ for addressing BAC recommendations, support/mentoring and encouraging course development. Monitoring was rated as ‘fairly useful’ and she commented that:

‘I think we discuss rather than monitor.’

She did not believe that the partnership encouraged personal development for the course teams, and rated it ‘not useful’.

Process

No difficulty was experienced in initially setting up the partnership. The only problems they encountered were the:

‘logistics of time commitments and distance.’

The course leader assessed the annual report as being ‘good’ for its structure, and the questions asked:

‘a useful way of summarising and considering action taken and recommendations made.’

Although the course has not gone through re-accreditation with this particular partner, the course leader expects it to be positive.

Value

When asked to rate the partnership in terms of value, it was rated ‘fairly high’ for time and effort. The course leader commented that it is:

‘useful to see another approach but costs a lot in time and money.’

Outcome

The course leader put forward a number of benefits of being partnered with a course that operates from a different core theoretical model:

‘We can learn from each other’s experience, learn more about each other’s model and critique our own.’

She also felt that the difference in their organisational context had benefits:

‘they ask different questions and have different priorities.’

The main disadvantages the course leader specified were:

‘We can’t discuss many aspects of curriculum, client work and therapy.’

and

‘they don’t understand the problems of size, in terms of organisational setting.’

When asked for suggestions to improve the scheme, the course leader commented that she would prefer to be partnered with a similar course, but thought that problems of competition would arise.

Overall Opinion

The course leader believed that the scheme was valuable in terms of learning about new ideas and being able to compare and contrast the two different courses.

Interview

Three staff were interviewed separately, by telephone: the head of training (full-time), the deputy head of training (0.9 contract), also course leader, and a course tutor (0.6 contract). The head of training is also involved in the BAC CAMG and, therefore, very familiar with the processes.

Purpose

The head and deputy both have reservations about the monitoring function. The deputy pointed out that there is a limit to how much monitoring can be done, because of the nature of the relationship. Furthermore, she believes that it is difficult to monitor a course that operates from a different core theoretical model:

‘We have different views about what is ethical training and what is not. So we are not in a position to identify what needs to be looked at.’

The head regards the scheme as providing ‘soft monitoring’ although she feels that:

‘it doesn’t work brilliantly. We have made a stab at it, discussing issues and asking each other hard questions. The problem is, if we found the answers to our questions were not satisfactory I don’t know what we would do.’

All three feel the partnership encourages development and that much has been gained from it. The course tutor focused on how the dialogue between the courses:

‘facilitates understanding of different ways of doing things.’

He also believes that the trainees benefited from visiting another course:

‘Trainees got a sense of how another course might do things and, for many, this confirmed that they made the right choice of course.’

Both the head and deputy commented about the supportive aspect of the scheme.

The head finds the partnership very supportive:

‘We discussed many issues, including those surrounding selection, and this was very supportive. I was pleasantly surprised about this because at the beginning I thought the partnership might be a burden.’

The deputy felt that the partnership is supportive to some extent, however:

‘it is not the first port of call if something goes wrong.’

She also felt that there is a conflict between the monitoring and supportive function:

‘The inclination is to sympathise with the other course, when they experience difficulties, and to tell them what they want to hear. Although we do talk about problems and are fairly honest with each other.’

Process

There was little difficulty in establishing this partnership, partly because one member of the partner’s course had been involved in the previous partnership. Although, as the head pointed out:

‘we did wonder if this would make it too collusive.’

They discussed it with the CAMG partnership co-ordinator and he was happy about the partnership and not worried about the possibility of it being too collusive.

Partnership Features

Trust

All three respondents feel that trust exists between the two course teams. The head believes that you can measure this by examining:

‘how easy it is to tell our partner about any difficulties.’

She also feels that because the courses are not in competition, due to them not being geographically close, then trust can prevail. The head and deputy thought trust developed more easily because of the previous contact between two of the participants.

The course tutor's view, that there is trust between the two course teams, is based on having contact with the partner's staff, he has not met any of their trainees. He does have some reservations, in that he believes that:

‘Trust hinges on the extent to which they understand our way of doing things. I haven't had enough contact with them to say whether they do completely understand.’

Relationships

None of the respondents thought that the relationship between the partners was based on power. The deputy also does not think that collusion is a possibility:

‘There is nothing to collude over. BAC knows that courses have difficulties.’

The head, however, does acknowledge the possibility of a collusive relationship developing, particularly:

‘when core models are different, it is easy to become collusive because you don't understand.’

Communication

Communication mainly centres on arranging the meetings. The head commented that:

‘if we are in a muddle we don't contact our partner. They are not used for day to day support.’

Conflicts

Both the head and deputy had not experienced any conflicts but the course tutor did feel that there is enormous potential for conflict but:

‘we are not close enough for that to happen, we don’t see each other often enough.’

Annual Report Form

The only comments made about this form, other than those identified in the questionnaire section, were from the head. She points out that some of the questions on the form have nothing to do with the partnership, and should be separated from it. She also thought that the questions:

‘are no good for hard monitoring.’

Overview

The course tutor, although appreciating the benefits of the scheme, did feel that:

‘it is a bit of a PR exercise. I wonder how deep the dialogue is. We don’t really know what is going on, other than what is talked about at the meeting.’

The deputy, on the other hand, values the scheme because:

‘It causes a certain amount of self-monitoring, in terms of what we say about ourselves and how we review what and why we do things, in order to give our rationale.’

She was also happy to stay partnered with a course of a different theoretical model, and one that was a distance away:

‘If we were partnered with another psychodynamic course, particularly if it was close in distance, there would be rivalry and it would be more time consuming, because we would talk more about content.’

The head is fully aware of the disadvantages in terms of time and money, and the conflict between the supportive and monitoring functions. However, she feels the benefits are great:

‘It alerts you to things you are not doing and are vulnerable to, so you can identify possible pitfalls before they happen. It also enables you to learn how to improve your own course.’

Summary

The case studies provide useful data for understanding the effectiveness of the BAC partnership scheme. The courses participating are from different settings, use different core theoretical models and the partnerships range from being fairly recently established to those which have been in existence for some time.

Purpose

In both the questionnaires and interviews, respondents were positive about the supportive and developmental role of the partnership scheme, although, some felt that the limited amount of contact restricted its usefulness.

The monitoring function, however, was less well received and the lack of BAC guidelines for this was believed to hamper the process.

Process

Common to all respondents was the difficulty in setting up meetings, because of time and distance. This was particularly a problem when the partners involved had different course structures, for example: evening or weekend.

Course leaders' experience of dealing with BAC and CAMG varied. Two course leaders in particular highlighted the difficulties encountered in respect of support from CAMG and the BAC office.

The annual report form was generally well received. Some of the respondents suggested minor amendments.

Partnership Features

The uniqueness of each partnership is highlighted in the content of the annual reports. Although they all discuss course issues, other discussions are dependent on what is pertinent at that time; for example, re-accreditation; BAC recommendations; course closure or validation.

There were, however, some over-riding themes. Respondents in three case studies felt that trust had developed between them and this was beneficial to the relationship. In the other two case studies trust did not exist, and this permeated the whole relationship, which was evident in the nature of the relationship and experience of it. Personalities were deemed to be an important factor in establishing trust and a good working relationship.

Communication varied between courses. Some only met once a year and had no other form of communication, whereas others communicated more often. With unsatisfactory partnerships, communication was generally kept to a minimum. Although in most instances effective partnerships involved more communication, this was not always the case.

Overview

The overall experience of being involved in a partnership differed. Three of the case study course teams found it a positive experience, whereas two did not. Of those two, one requested another partner and the other had a partner whose course was closing.

In determining whether the type of experience depended upon the theoretical model of the participants, questions were asked about advantages and disadvantages of being partnered with a course of either a similar or different core theoretical model. Answers for both focused mainly on the advantages, with the

exception of one course leader, who could not find any at all. In respect of organisational type, the evidence did not suggest that this had any impact on the success of a partnership. Two of the case studies mentioned that being partnered with a course from a different organisational context had some benefits, whereas the others did not comment about it.

This suggests that successful partnerships do not hinge on the mix of theoretical models, or organisational type, rather other factors are more important. One of these factors is personal experience. This is illustrated by the fact that one of the course leaders, who was not happy with her current partnership but had experienced one that was satisfactory, rated the scheme positively in respect of value. Only one course leader was not convinced of the value, basing this view on her one and only experience of the scheme, which adds further credence to this factor.

However, perhaps the most important factor highlighted by the case studies was that of personalities. Partnerships were successful, and positive relationships formed, when mutual respect, trust and understanding had developed, which is a reflection of the personalities involved.

In conclusion, not all respondents were convinced that the partnership scheme, in its current format, should continue, although they could all see the benefits of having a system in place that enables accredited courses to have contact with one another.

Chapter 7

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The partnership scheme has a number of components that can be related, in part, to themes in the available literature from a number of distinct areas. These areas are partnerships, mentoring, accountability and evaluation and they each offer a way to interpret the findings. The partnership literature enables a comparison to be made between effective documented partnerships and the BAC partnership scheme. The mentoring literature provides a template for the development of an effective mentoring relationship and this can be applied to the partnership scheme, in order to assess whether the supportive/mentoring function fits this model, and whether it is desirable to do so in this case. The accountability and evaluation literature applies directly to the monitoring function and should highlight whether it can be successfully undertaken when incorporated into a scheme with other components.

It is not always possible to make links between literature and the findings from the preliminary investigation, survey and case studies because of the uniqueness of the BAC partnership scheme. There are no examples in the literature of similar partnership schemes that include mentoring, accountability and evaluation within a setting external to the institution, and, consequently, no identification of the specific problems that can develop. A major difficulty is the fact that partners are required to both support and monitor. Furthermore, those involved in the scheme may, legitimately, be in contact as infrequently as once a year. A further difficulty is the relatively unsystematic allocation of partners, when only limited consideration is given to factors that may prove to be problematic, for example theoretical model, institution type, personalities, geography and resource implications.

However, it is possible to identify the way in which the empirical aspects from the four components of the literature review, partnerships, mentoring, accountability

and evaluation, link with the findings from the preliminary investigation, survey and case studies.

Partnerships

Partnership is a central feature of the BAC scheme and this section focuses on how the BAC partnership scheme compares with other schemes featured in the literature.

Partnership Defined

A partnership is defined as having a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate (Pugh 1989). Gallacher (1995) further adds that a partnership involves a working relationship that works successfully towards achieving its purpose. Those people who support the notion of partnerships view them as either supportive and developmental or a legitimate means for dealing with financial pressures often faced by educational institutions. Others are more sceptical, and view them less favourably, for example as a way of pushing an institution into a partnership that it would otherwise not have entertained, or to mask hidden agendas (Kirk 1995).

The BAC partnership scheme is designed to be supportive and developmental and, as Gallacher (1995) suggests, the relationships are intended to work successfully towards this. However, accredited courses are obliged to commit to the scheme and some did find themselves partnered with a course they would not have chosen under different circumstances which, as Kirk (1995) highlights, can lead to a partnership being not so effective.

Chadwick (1996) argues that partnerships in further education have a strategic function. They enable participants to deal with the regulatory aspect of the sector, focus on their areas of expertise whilst developing competence in areas of weakness and are flexible enough to allow the establishment of a relationship most suited to the partner's needs, in terms of duration and structure.

However, as the Further Education Unit (FEU) (1994) highlights, personalities can play a key role in establishing and sustaining a partnership. Furthermore, Austin and MacManus (1992) suggest that when partners are from different institutional settings, with different cultures and traditions, it is important not to underestimate the complexities

Chadwick's (1996) view can be related to the BAC scheme, in that participants help one another with the recommendations and conditions imposed by CAMG and, in effective partnerships, stimulate development. Furthermore, participants engaged in the BAC scheme come from a variety of institutional settings and, as Austin and MacManus (1992) suggest, potentially this makes the relationship more complex; although because participants have a shared sense of purpose at a higher level, in that they are required to comply with set criteria in order to remain accredited, the effects are minimised.

Effective Partnerships

The literature indicates that effective partnerships are those that are flexible and developmental (FEU 1994). The FEU highlights the key role personalities play in a partnership and the effects of a mismatch. Linked to this is the notion of mutual trust, which Gallacher's (1995) findings indicate is of great importance if a partnership is to be effective.

The effect of personalities is illustrated in the BAC partnership scheme. The three effective case study courses have no difficulties with personalities, relationships are mature and well developed. The other two case study courses, however, both encountered difficulties with certain members of their partner course. The survey findings did not highlight any particular problems with personalities, with the exception of one course leader, who, commenting on the partner course, felt: 'sometimes I feel we speak different languages'.

Gallacher's (1995) view that effective partnerships are based on mutual trust is also illustrated quite clearly by the case studies. Case studies 3, 4 and 5 have developed a trusting relationship with their partners and the findings indicate that

the partnerships are effective, within the constraints of the scheme. Course leaders from case studies 1 and 2, however, felt that trust had not developed and that the partnerships are not effective:

‘There is an absence of trust, because of the quality of contact.’

(case study 2)

The notion of trust is not examined explicitly in the survey, but the implication from many of the comments is that it is present in most of the partnerships.

Saunders and Stradling (1991) identify a number of characteristics present in an effective partnership, including: a strong commitment, at the level of policy making, to most of the partnership goals; an agenda incorporating strategic co-operation and collaboration; an acknowledgement that more is gained from the partnership than from isolation; and a proficient partnership co-ordinator, who keeps up-to-date on any initiative and has the ability to negotiate, mediate and develop an atmosphere of teamwork – which their research findings indicate is the key determinant.

These characteristics of an effective partnership can be usefully compared to the BAC partnership scheme. There is not a strong commitment to partnership goals relating to the policy making because participants in the scheme do not engage in policy making. There is, however, a commitment to the spirit of the scheme, by all but one of the survey respondents, although many would like to see a number of operational changes made, such as an explicit recognition of the different settings in which counsellor training takes place and of differences in the levels of funding available for meetings.

Some would also like to see more structural changes to the scheme, as illustrated in case study one:

‘An internal auditing system with some form of external verification from a link person at BAC would be better.’

Furthermore, partners do not engage in agenda setting at a strategic level, although effective partnerships are co-operative and collaborative. This is highlighted by the fact that 70 percent of survey respondents found the partnership either very useful or useful when asked about the supportive and mentoring function:

‘Helpful to know another course and their staff and to know they will be an available resource when or if needed in this capacity.’

(survey)

Respondents were also aware that it is preferable to be part of a partnership rather than being isolated. This is evident from the preliminary investigation, survey and case studies. All interviewees in the preliminary investigation and case studies, and all but one of the survey respondents, were positive about the scheme, in terms of its potential value, even though a number of operational changes were recommended. Even in those cases where partnerships are ineffective, particularly case studies one and two, the scheme was valued for its potential, in terms of ‘networking’.

The role of partnership co-ordinator for each partnership is not a specific requirement for registration, although CAMG does require a designated member of staff and/or student from each course to draft a report on each consultation. However, all the case study course leaders co-ordinate on a more informal basis, although, as findings from the case studies indicate, personalities are one of the most important factors in determining effectiveness.

The mediation role is held by the partnership co-ordinator from CAMG and their remit is to deal with any difficulties that arise within individual partnerships, and address any issues on the annual report form, although findings indicate that this does not always happen. 23 percent of survey respondents classed the support from the CAMG partnership co-ordinator as poor, or very poor, and two of the case study courses identified times when issues were not dealt with. It is also

difficult for the partnership co-ordinator to develop an atmosphere of teamwork because involvement is not at the right level.

Ineffective Partnerships

The literature indicates that ineffective partnerships may feature one or more of a number of characteristics. They may focus on the formal arrangements and administrative details, rather than the conceptual relationship between different components (Kirk 1995). It is also suggested that ineffective partnerships are stale or cosy and have a high turnover of staff (Austin 1991). In some instances they may have been party to a number of bad experiences, had unrealistic expectations or been subject to a change in organisational culture (Leech 1995).

A number of these characteristics are present in the BAC partnership scheme. The course leader from case study one, part of an ineffective partnership, focused mainly on the formal arrangements and administrative details, pointing out that she only kept in contact with her partner because of allegiance to the scheme. She also had bad experiences within the partnership, particularly in respect of initially setting up a meeting and maintaining contact, which was very one sided, as ‘she did all the running’.

Members of the case study two course team, also deemed ineffective, had some bad experiences. In particular, during their re-accreditation period, the partner took a long time to submit its report to CAMG: ‘which was very short, and held up the process’. The course leader also felt that their partner was not supportive – unlike her previous experience of being involved in a partnership.

Other potential barriers to effectiveness include partners having institutional structures that are not comparable (FEU 1994) or that partners do not share the same values or are at different developmental stages (FEU 1994).

These barriers have not arisen within the BAC scheme. There is a mix of institutional contexts, from the statutory and non-statutory sectors, and the findings indicate that this is not a key factor in determining effectiveness.

69 percent of the survey respondents have partners from different institutional contexts. All survey respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of being partnered with a course from a different institutional context. Only 38 percent of them identified any problems, which were mainly about lack of understanding, and were no more significant than those disadvantages highlighted by those whose partner came from a similar institutional context. Furthermore, of the two ineffective case study partnerships, only one was partnered with a course from a different institutional context and this was not blamed for the ineffectiveness.

The partnership scheme does, in part, validate the claim that ineffectiveness can result if partners do not share the same values. The course leader from case study 1 highlights the disadvantages of being partnered with a course of a different core theoretical model as:

‘different language, structures, thinking – worlds apart.’

This was not the only reason for the ineffectiveness of case study one’s partnership, a number of difficulties emerged which, taken together, meant this partnership was not successful; including lack of trust, the logistics involved in arranging meetings, geographical distance, support from the BAC office and the personalities involved.

The other ineffective case study course operates from the same core theoretical model as their partner. However, values differ in respect of what measures would be taken if something was perceived to be going awry:

‘I wouldn’t just sit back and watch what was going on,
especially if things were seriously wrong.’

(case study 2)

Responses from the survey are mixed regarding values. 65 percent of courses are partnered with a course operating from a different core theoretical model,

however, 38 percent of these found no disadvantages at all. The majority of the remaining courses found the main problem was that they are unable to discuss curriculum and skills training matters. Only three course leaders made comments that imply this difference is seriously detrimental to effectiveness.

Mentoring

Mentoring Relationships

The literature examines the mentoring relationship and how, despite the differing contexts, it usually involves the pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with someone who is not so skilled or experienced, with a view to developing the less experienced person (Murray 1991). This relationship, particularly if it involves peers, can be useful to encourage reflective practice (Hankey 1999). Jones et al (1997), in their research into teachers' perceptions of mentoring in initial teacher training, also stress that the relationship is based on two-way communication.

The mentoring aspect of the BAC partnership scheme does not fit the traditional view, expressed by Murray (1991), because pairings are not based on experience or skill. No consideration is given to the length of time a course has been established or the experience of the staff. Also, because of the infrequent meetings, it can be difficult to establish a mentoring relationship that promotes skill development. Although, it is also important to note that the scheme does encourage reflective practice in conjunction with peers, in the same way as the review by Hankey (1999).

Despite some of these difficulties, however, the findings do indicate that 70 percent of the survey respondents and four out of the five case studies are involved in relationships that are supportive, useful and (implicitly) based on two-way communication. However, the course leaders from the two ineffective case study partnerships (one and two) both felt that communication was one-way and that their partner gained more from the relationship than they did, in terms of support.

An effective mentoring relationship also depends on the qualities of the mentor. What makes a good mentor is discussed by Parsloe (1995), based on a report produced by the Council of National Academic Awards (CNAA) and the Government Training Agency, and Cox (1997), who investigated mentoring of newly qualified teachers. The qualities they highlight include, being: perceptive and supportive; high performers, secure in their own position; able to establish a good and professional relationship whilst sympathetic, accessible and knowledgeable; non-judgemental and able to identify and communicate the positive aspects of the mentee's work.

The qualities that Parsloe (1995) and Cox (1997) identify as being necessary for a good mentor apply to the participants in the partnership scheme. All the interviewees in the preliminary investigation, 50 percent of survey respondents and four out of the five case studies, highlight how perceptive and supportive partners are in terms of the insight brought to issues under discussion.

The desire for participants to be high performers, secure in their own position, is also apparent in the relationship between case study four and their partner. The past course leader commented that the relationship was not characterised by power dynamics because staff members 'are secure in their personal power and reputations.'

Good relationships have developed in effective partnerships, which are characterised by professionalism, accessibility, knowledge and sympathy. Furthermore, both survey and case study respondents appreciate the support and understanding offered by partners. However, availability is a major difficulty. Many participants experienced difficulties in finding the time to meet, although partners did make themselves accessible over the telephone.

Whether partners are classified as knowledgeable depends on the level at which it is investigated. At a strategic level, there is common understanding because all institutions are offering a BAC accredited course. However, difficulties can arise when the core theoretical model is different. This is illustrated in both the survey

and case study findings. 65 percent of survey respondents are partnered with a course of a different core theoretical model, and 62 percent found this resulted in some disadvantages, for example, a lack of understanding of the more detailed areas. Case studies one and five also mentioned the limitations of this type of relationship:

‘When core models are different, it is easy to become collusive because you don’t understand.’

(case study 5)

Case study two, however, in which both partners operate from the same theoretical model, explained the potential benefits of being able to share knowledge ‘and respond to market forces, whilst maintaining philosophical principles’.

This can also be related to organisational setting. 69 percent of survey respondents operate from a different organisational setting and 38 percent identified disadvantages, particularly in terms of not understanding the significance of differences.

Although mentors are expected to be non-judgemental, and able to identify and communicate the positive aspects of behaviour, it is not always possible in the partnership scheme, because it involves monitoring as well as support, as pointed out by the CAMG partnership co-ordinator:

‘Monitoring needs to be done by a neutral body, rather than by a partner who is also there in a supportive role.’

Training

The literature highlights the need for training mentors. Sampson and Yeomans (1994), when studying mentors in primary schools, found that additional skills and knowledge are required for mentors, over and above those required for being

an effective teacher. Furthermore, research by Coleman (1997) and Brooks (1996) found that training in interpersonal skills is paramount for mentors.

At present no training is offered to participants of the partnership scheme. This presents difficulties to participants, and twelve percent of survey respondents suggest that clearer operational guidelines should be provided for. This is echoed by some of the case study course teams, who point out the need for some definitive guidelines.

Group Mentoring

Wiseman (1997) investigated group mentoring. She discovered that group mentoring relationships reflect those in traditional mentoring relationships, in particular sharing of information, experiences and skills, although they manifest themselves in different ways in a group setting. She also found that trust is imperative in this type of relationship.

These group mentoring dynamics are present in the partnership scheme. Effective partnership relationships involve the sharing of experience and members supporting one another. The case study courses in which the partnership is effective, three, four and five, clearly demonstrate and value these characteristics, as do 70 percent of survey respondents.

In respect of the development and maintenance of trust, the case study courses all commented on trust and the more effective relationships were those in which trust had developed, case studies three, four and five. As the course leader from case study three pointed out: 'if you don't build up trust the partnership could be conflictual and unproductive.'

Benefits of Mentoring

Brady (1993) found that a successful mentoring relationship for principals depends on a suitable pairing being made, considering factors such as institution type, experience, knowledge and ability to take on board new ideas. The

preliminary investigation into the BAC partnership scheme indicates that, although some thought is given to the pairing, particularly in respect of core theoretical model and proximity, the choice is dependent on who is newly accredited at that time, thereby, as Brady (1993) indicates, reducing the chances of a successful pairing being made.

Both Brady (1993) and Bolam et al (1995) found a number of benefits arising from the mentoring relationship. It gives participants the opportunity to talk through problems, enabling them to obtain another perspective. It also enables reflection, reduces the feeling of isolation and enhances self-confidence. These benefits are prevalent in the research findings. Findings from both the survey and case studies tend to concur in relation to the benefits of mentoring. 50 percent of survey respondents and three of the five case studies made favourable comments. Even where partnerships are ineffective, as in case study one and two, the potential benefits of this aspect of the scheme are recognised.

Three survey respondents and three case study respondents point to how useful the relationship is when discussing and reflecting on issues. The alternative perspective, often put forward by their partner, is also seen as beneficial, particularly when the partner operates from a different core theoretical model. Furthermore, although isolation was not mentioned specifically, sharing problems and developmental issues was also viewed as being of great benefit.

The mentoring aspect of the partnership scheme does not affect institutional management as a whole, although, in some instances, there is a direct influence on course management. For example, one survey respondent mentions that:

‘we have received a lot of help with structuring, e.g. assessments, ethical issues, recruitment etc.’

Head teacher mentoring also brings potential benefits for the institution, following the initial mentoring period, which relates to personal qualities and issues surrounding being a new head teacher (Bush et al 1996). Also, from the mentor’s point of view, the mentoring relationship is mutually enhancing (Garvey 1995)

and it can be an effective learning tool, in terms of enabling mentees to learn faster, cope with change more effectively and encourage a realistic and mature attitude, particularly if the right people are charged with the responsibility (Berkeley 1994).

It is not easy to ascertain whether mentoring in the BAC partnership scheme is mutually enhancing because findings are anonymous and respondents are examined independently, rather than with their partner. However, comments are made from both survey and case study respondents that imply mutual enhancement is present:

‘We can learn from each other’s experience, learn more about each other’s model and critique our own.’

(case study 5)

When considering Berkeley’s (1994) view about mentoring being an effective learning tool, a number of respondents from both the survey and case studies believe that the partnership experience afforded them the opportunity to develop because of the exchange of views and support for ongoing development.

Institutional difficulties of mentoring

Coleman (1997) discusses institutional difficulties in her research into the mentoring of newly qualified teachers. She notes the lack of time afforded to those engaged in the mentoring process and the inconsistent practice, a point also highlighted by Little (1995), and concludes that senior management needs to recognise the time commitment involved, in order to address some of these difficulties.

Participants in the partnership scheme experienced institutional difficulties. 31 percent of the survey respondents point to time being a factor affecting the smooth running of the partnership. This point is also emphasised by the case study

respondents and the past partnership co-ordinator: 'To some people the time and effort required proved impossible....'

Another institutional difficulty is when there is little or no preparation or training, a point mentioned by Kram and Bragar (1991) and Gay (1994), who all agree that problems arise when mentors are inadequately prepared. These potential difficulties of inadequate preparation or training can be related to the partnership scheme. The only preparation given to participants is a letter from CAMG that points out the basic requirements and stresses the importance of the partnership. 8% of survey respondents felt unclear about the purpose of the scheme and 11% commented that more guidelines are required. Course leaders from case studies two and four also found the level of preparation to be inadequate.

The point made by Gay and Stephenson (1998), about how mentoring can be at odds with assessing performance, is pertinent to the partnership scheme. The findings from the preliminary investigation and case studies indicate the difficulties experienced by participants with having to both mentor and evaluate their partner. This was mentioned by the past partnership co-ordinator and the head and deputy head of training in case study five.

Interpersonal difficulties of mentoring

Interpersonal difficulties include the incompatibility of the two roles of mentor and manager (Jowett and Stead 1994) and a culture that does not incorporate mentoring into senior management activity (Garvey 1995). These interpersonal difficulties manifested themselves in the partnership scheme in several ways. Conflict arose for some participants because they were expected to follow BAC requirements and those of the institution to which they belong, most notably those in higher education. Case study one, for example, found that BAC expected them to give more support to students on placement than the institution would generally allow.

Other difficulties relate to the potential problems that can arise when the mentor is an unapproachable senior member of staff (Coleman 1997) or an inappropriate

mentor (Berkeley). In the partnership scheme, unsuitable mentors, because they were unapproachable, inappropriate or unwilling to meet the requirements, caused difficulties for two of the case studies' courses.

Accountability

The accountability literature focuses on the contexts within which it operates and its effects. Barton et al (1980), in their study of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), found that accountability is a two-way process, in which schools are obligated towards the LEA, which in turn has external obligations in order to maintain education standards. The partnership scheme echoes this, in that the accountability between CAMG and accredited courses is a two-way process. In order to meet its external obligations of promoting and maintaining standards, CAMG endeavours to be supportive (although the success of this varies) and 35 percent of survey respondents thought the support excellent or good. However, 23 percent of the survey respondents believe it to be very poor or poor, citing the example of writing to CAMG and not receiving a reply. There was also a mixed response from the case study course teams. Two thought it good and three not so good.

Market Accountability

The government, in respect of self-managed schools (Bush et al 1993), promotes accountability to the market place and consumers via the Education Reform Act (1988). Although, as Petch (1992, p91) pointed out, this may be problematic because 'market accountability tends to be marked by confrontation rather than co-operation.'

Accredited courses operate in a free market and this can affect the partnership aspect of the scheme. This is pointed out by the accreditation services manager, who commented on the problems associated with partnering courses in close proximity. The deputy course leader of case study five echoes this:

‘If we were partnered with another psychodynamic course, particularly if it was close in distance, there would be rivalry.....’

The above comments endorse the criticism made of the market approach (Petch 1992), that confrontation tends to result from this type of accountability.

Professional Accountability

Professional accountability, which focuses on peer assessment in terms of values and behaviour being in line with accepted norms, is investigated by a number of researchers. Elliott et al (1979) pointed out that professional accountability can be applied to schools, providing they can show to teachers that the school’s aims are to protect and develop educational values.

Professional accountability is a particularly important component of this research. The BAC partnership scheme involves participants being accountable to one another in a number of ways, both formally and informally. Formally, CAMG, members of which are also peers of the course teams, assess courses in order to accredit and reaccredit them. Also, peer assessment forms part of the re-accreditation process, during which time the partner has to provide a written report to CAMG.

Informal professional accountability is apparent during the regular partnership meetings, which involve discussions of pertinent issues and appropriate ways of addressing them, although the success of such arrangements varies.

Furthermore, professional accountability goes beyond the limits of the partnership scheme. CAMG is instrumental in helping BAC achieve its two organisational objectives, as stated in its Memorandum and Articles of Association, one of which is to help raise the standards of counselling and psychotherapy, by promoting and providing education and training for counsellors.

Public Accountability

The nature of public accountability in education has changed since the advent of self-managing schools and the incorporation of colleges. Ball et al (1997), in their study of accountability in a local education authority, identify a model of accountability, which parallels the model of public accountability for educational institutions, in the way that service provision is related to community needs and interests.

This does not relate so readily to the BAC partnership scheme, because at present counselling is not regulated by statute. There is, however, accountability through the managerial hierarchy, which at times can produce conflict because it occurs in two contexts. Tutors on a programme are accountable to their course leader, who in turn is accountable to CAMG for the maintenance of standards, as laid down in the course accreditation criteria. On the other hand, course leaders are accountable to their institution for the delivery of the programme and its integration into the wider provision. Two of the case study courses highlight the difficulties this can cause; case study one, in respect of work placement hours and case study three in relation to assessment. Both of these courses are offered in the statutory sector (higher education) as part of much wider structured provision, which can lead to a degree of inflexibility and lack of autonomy.

Evaluation

Types

The literature identifies two types of evaluation, internal and external, and the type of evaluation adopted will depend upon its purpose. Evaluation is an integral part of the partnership scheme and is both internal and external. In order to become accredited, courses are evaluated against a set of predetermined criteria. Once accredited and in a partnership, course leaders' are required to submit an annual report form evaluating the partnership consultative process. At the re-accreditation stage partners are required to submit an evaluation report, based on

the partnership consultations. This report is used, alongside a further evaluation of the course against the predetermined criteria, by CAMG when deciding whether to re-accredit.

In the case of internal evaluation, Clift et al (1987) argue that, for it to be effective, it needs to be integrated into the institutional culture and curriculum development, a view based on his examination of 200 self evaluation activities. A feature of the partnership scheme is its integrated evaluation. The annual report form is a formative evaluation of the partnership process. It identifies the issues discussed, many of which relate to the effectiveness of the curriculum. The fact that one is completed every year, throughout the duration of the partnership, means that any difficulties can be addressed, although this did not always happen, a point mentioned by one of the survey respondents and two of the case study course leaders.

The partner re-accreditation report, although based on the consultative meetings held throughout the five years, is not an ongoing evaluation, which means that any problems arising will not be addressed immediately.

Internal evaluation, in respect of monitoring course activity, is not perceived as effective by some of those involved in the partnership scheme, only 38 percent of survey respondents found it very useful or useful: 'We have not had adequate time and staff availability to devote to this.'

Also, all case study course teams had at least one person who did not view the monitoring function as effective. This could be because, as Clift et al (1987) highlights, it is not integrated effectively. Although it can be argued that the evaluation is integrated into curriculum development, because of the limited amount of contact between courses and wider influences, it is not fully integrated into institutional culture.

In respect of external evaluation, Lofthouse et al (1995) examined education inspection and found that, because institutions do not feel ownership of the reports, they may not accept the recommendations, and act on them, so readily.

When applying the concept of external evaluation to the scheme, CAMG evaluates courses at both the accreditation and re-accreditation stage. Unlike evaluations carried out by Ofsted and the FEFC, reports are not available for public scrutiny.

Undertaking Evaluation

Evidence from Nixon (1992), illustrated in practice by Rolph and Rolph (1989) when they developed an evaluation process to address the legislative requirements faced by higher education institutions, suggests that effective evaluation goes through four closely linked stages: planning, setting up and focusing; gathering evidence; analysis and dissemination and utilization. These four phases can be related to the partnership scheme and assessed for their effectiveness

Planning, setting up and focusing

Planning, consultation with participants and the need to have a specific focus are of utmost importance (Nixon 1992). It is also essential to have an appropriate schedule (Aspinwall et al 1992) and to allow sufficient time and resources for gathering evidence effectively. The partnership scheme's evaluation component evolved, rather than being systematically planned, because, as more courses became accredited, it was not possible to keep track of all the activities in the informal way previously favoured by the partnership co-ordinator. Furthermore, criticisms of the scheme mentioned the lack of focus:

‘The monitoring function seems rather unclear, especially the boundaries of what a course should do if they have grave reservations about the partner.’

(survey)

Gathering Evidence

Techniques for gathering evidence vary, depending on the questions being asked and the audience (Patton 1987). Triangulation is often applied in order to gain an all round understanding of the issues. The techniques used for gathering evidence on the BAC partnership scheme are the:

- Annual report form, which is both quantitative and qualitative and comprises a series of open and closed questions
- Re-accreditation report, which varies in content and structure, within a qualitative framework, because there are no guidelines for its production.

Both of these proved effective ways to gather evidence in many cases. 50 percent of survey respondents rated the annual report form as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’; although some points were raised, for example, the fact that the question relating to the implementation of conditions and recommendations need not be included every year. A further problem, raised by the partnership co-ordinator, is the fact that so many of the courses do not submit their report on time.

84 percent of those who had been through re-accreditation were positive about it. However, it was problematic for one of the case study courses:

‘I was disappointed at the length of time it took (partner) to write their report for our re-accreditation document. I was also concerned about how brief it was.’

(case study 2)

Also, because the evidence gathered tends to be qualitative, there are potential problems, as highlighted by Patton (1987), because comparative analysis is difficult due to responses not being systematic and standardised.

Furthermore, a problem identified by many of those involved in the scheme is the lack of time and resources available for partnership activities, including monitoring:

Analysis and Dissemination

The analysis stage requires skill, expertise, time and effort. The methods used determine the way in which findings are analysed and, if a triangulatory approach is adopted, it may be possible to produce 'inter-subjective' agreement (Clemmett & Pearce 1986).

Findings from the partnership scheme evaluations are analysed at two levels. At a higher level the annual reports are collated by the CAMG partnership co-ordinator and analysed in order to give an overall picture of partnership activity. On a more individual level the partner re-accreditation report is used by the re-accreditation panel, in conjunction with other criteria, to assess whether a course still meets the standard set for accredited courses.

There is a link between the two types of evaluation, in that the partner's report for re-accreditation is based on records kept of partnership consultations, and these records inform the annual report form. The annual report form records and gives an overall evaluation of how the partnership is working. It also records the position regarding the implementation of recommendations and conditions.

However, analysis of submitted reports is not undertaken systematically and a triangulatory approach is not undertaken, which is evidenced by the fact that information from each is not used comparatively.

Analysis also needs to be independent and honest (Clemmett and Pearce 1986) and this fact led the CAMG partnership co-ordinator to be cautious about the re-accreditation reports submitted by partners:

'The reports are useful in that they identify what has been learnt and what developments have taken place. But, in terms of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of conditions and recommendations..... that is a different matter.'

In respect of dissemination, the ways in which findings are disseminated reflect the management approach towards evaluation, and depend upon what type of evaluation is being undertaken. Relating this to the BAC partnership scheme, the CAMG partnership co-ordinator uses information from the annual report forms to produce a composite report; although the change in co-ordinator resulted in a different approach to this, which is far less effective in an evaluative sense. This report is circulated to members of the CAMG and copies are available for members of the Accreditation and Management Committees, should they wish to see it.

Only the course team applying for re-accreditation, and the particular panel charged with dealing with the application, see the re-accreditation report. These documents are, as outlined by Scott (1990), private and official with restricted access, although no formal procedure exists identifying restrictions on access.

Two problems are associated with disseminating information – identifying the interested parties and keeping them sufficiently informed without overwhelming them (Aspinwall et al 1992). These do not apply in a straightforward way to participants in the scheme. In respect of the composite report produced by the CAMG partnership co-ordinator, all courses in the scheme can be regarded as interested parties, however, because of the confidential course specific information contained within it, it is not disseminated to all participants. This point also relates to the re-accreditation report submitted by an applicant's partner.

The latter problem is one encountered by the scheme. The change in partnership co-ordinator led to a different style of annual report. The new style report does not keep interested parties sufficiently informed because it lacks detailed information. By implication, therefore, it does not overwhelm interested parties. Whether or not the re-accreditation report provides sufficient information depends upon the individual author. In case study two the course co-ordinator pointed out that the re-accreditation report was very short. However, 32 percent of survey respondents found the content of their partner's report to be either excellent or good.

Utilisation

Evaluation can be used as a formative process to manage change, although ethical issues need to be considered (Aspinwall et al 1992). Sufficient resources need to be in place, to enable recommendations to be taken on board. The BAC partnership scheme criteria makes compulsory the need for sufficient resources to be set aside for taking on board recommendations. Courses applying for re-accreditation are obliged to meet any recommendations and/or conditions in order to remain accredited.

There also needs to be a commitment to act on the findings, which links to the notion of power within an organisation; some have the power to implement (or not) changes arising from an evaluation (Aspinwall et al 1992). However, the research findings indicate that action is not always taken by CAMG in respect of issues brought up in the annual report forms, as identified by one of the survey respondents and the course leaders from case study one and four.

The influence of power in the utilisation of evaluation findings also relates to the partnership scheme, as CAMG have the power to grant re-accreditation, which fits with the control of rewards put forward by Aspinwall et al (1992).

Peer Evaluation

Peer evaluation in education has evolved over the last twenty-five years (Wicks 1992). Appraisal systems often include peer evaluation, for example in classroom observation. This can be problematic, as the Suffolk Education Department (1985) points out, because some observers have difficulty divorcing themselves from their relationship with the person being observed.

Monitoring within the partnership scheme is all based on peer evaluation. CAMG and validation panels include representatives from accredited courses. The problem raised by the Suffolk Education Department (1985) can be applied to the partnership scheme. The propensity for collusion was raised by a number of respondents. Of the 35 percent of survey respondents partnered with courses of a

similar core theoretical model, 19 percent commented on this and, of the 31 percent partnered with a course from a similar institutional type, 20 percent commented:

‘can get into collusive commiserating rather than constructive investigation of alternatives.’

The deputy from case study five also mentioned collusion, however she felt it would be easier to collude when core models are different because of lack of understanding of certain aspects.

Peer review is also viewed as an appropriate quality measure in higher education. Wicks (1992) examined peer evaluation in her research into the aspects of the national quality assurance operated by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). CNAA used experts in the field, from a variety of settings, and they shared their experiences and gave examples of good practice, as well as judging standards. This research led Wicks (1992) to highlight a number of pre-requisites for the successful implementation of peer review:

- Course team to initiate agenda
- Mutual respect between the judges and those being judged
- Written evidence to be submitted before the discussions
- Criteria on which judgements made reflect standards set

The partnership scheme can be compared to this system because experts in the field, from a variety of settings, are included in CAMG and on the validation panels. They too share experiences, give examples of good practice and judge standards. The pre-requisites that Wicks (1992) identifies for effective peer evaluation can be used to assess the partnership scheme:

Course team to initiate agenda

Courses participating in the partnership scheme do set their own agenda for meetings, although both parties are guided by CAMG requirements, which are to

review any recommendations and conditions, share good practice and discuss any course or organisational issues.

Mutual respect between the judges and those being judged

This pre-requisite is not met fully by the scheme. 14 percent of survey responses to questions focusing on the difficulties experienced when partnered with a course from a different theoretical model imply a lack of respect, although it is not specifically stated:

‘....sometimes I feel we speak different languages’

(survey)

Furthermore the problems highlighted by the course teams from case studies one and two also indicate a lack of mutual respect and the course leader from case study two pointed out that:

‘they got a lot from the partnership.....It was very much
‘one-way’ traffic.’

Written evidence to be submitted before the discussions

The validation panels receive partner’s reports in advance of the re-accreditation assessment. 76 percent of survey respondents’ exchange course information and/or curriculum material throughout the year.

Criteria on which judgements made reflect standards set

This is an aspect that is only partially achieved by the partnership scheme. Re-accreditation criteria reflect the standards set by BAC for what constitutes an appropriate training course.

At the lower level, evaluating the partnership process, a major difficulty experienced by those involved is the lack of criteria provided by CAMG. This is highlighted by the course tutor from case study course 4:

‘BAC isn’t clear about the objectives of the partnership scheme and needs to address the monitoring/review/evaluation role.’

Structure

A number of aspects of the scheme’s structure do not link well with the evidence in the literature review. These issues are reviewed in this section.

Fitness for purpose

The purpose of the scheme, as identified by the preliminary investigation, is to monitor the implementation of any recommendations/conditions; to provide a supportive environment; to enable courses to deal with any issues, rather than having to wait until re-accreditation; to enable CAMG to keep in touch with how the scheme is working in practice and to prevent accredited courses feeling isolated.

The findings indicate that the scheme does not entirely fulfil its purpose. In the preliminary investigation the accreditation services manager pointed out that the monitoring aspect was not effective and this comment was borne out in the survey and case study findings. Only 38 percent of survey respondents found the monitoring aspect very useful or useful and respondents from each of the case study course teams commented on the difficulties associated with this aspect of the scheme.

The survey findings also indicate that the supportive/mentoring function is the most effective aspect of the scheme. Where a partnership is effective, the case study courses reiterate this.

In respect of CAMG being able to keep in touch with what is happening, although reports are submitted (not always to deadline), the analysis of them by the current partnership co-ordinator is limited and does not provide sufficient useful information. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, several respondents commented on the lack of response to identified issues.

Resource Implications

These focus on cost, in terms of money, time and effort. All respondents highlight resources as being problematic. Finance was an issue because many institutions did not fund the course representatives' visit, particularly in private institutions where financial resources are limited. The cost is exacerbated when students visit a partner course, a fact pointed out by the accreditation services manager.

The time involved in attending partnership meetings was another factor causing some concern. Many course teams involve a substantial number of part-timers and they are expected to attend meetings in their own time. This can involve a whole day if the partner course is some distance away, which is the case with a considerable number of partnerships.

Two of the case study courses, and 4 percent of survey respondents, felt that the amount of effort put into the scheme is not always justified:

‘The time and effort involved is not rewarded currently in terms of support/learning gained.’

(case study 2)

Furthermore, twelve percent of survey respondents believe that they had not taken full advantage of the scheme and one reason put forward for this is the physical distance between partnered courses.

Communication

Course teams communicate with their partners in a variety of ways. Partnership criteria require at least one meeting per year and the survey findings indicate that 58 percent meet more often. The case studies highlight that the effectiveness of this communication depends on the nature of the partnership. Case study one partners only continued communicating because of allegiance to the scheme. Case study three partners, however, communicate on a more regular basis and more fully.

The findings indicate that course teams would communicate more if they were not constrained by resources and institutional pressures.

Participants in the scheme also communicate with BAC and CAMG annually, via the annual report form, and on a more ad hoc basis, depending on any issues that arise. There is a mixed response in respect of how effective this liaison and support is, as indicated by the survey and case study findings. As previously mentioned 35 percent of survey respondents found the support from CAMG excellent or good and 23 percent found it poor or very poor. Also, the two least effective case study partnerships, case study one and two, both experienced difficulties in this area.

Participants' needs

All the scheme's participants are required to meet the same criteria. However, each course experiences the scheme differently, because of who they are partnered with, the conditions/recommendations to be addressed, the issues each one of them faces and the stage of development the course is at. This has meant that not all participants have their needs met by the current structure.

This is highlighted by the findings, from both effective and non-effective partnerships, irrespective of whether the partner is from a similar or different institutional type and operates from a similar or different core theoretical model. Two of the case study course teams did not have their needs met and at least 58%

of survey respondents highlight one or more aspects of the scheme which they found of little use:

‘We cannot exchange theoretical and skills training ideas as fully as we might like.’

(survey)

Conflicts

There are three potential areas of conflict for scheme participants: between their institutional requirements and BAC requirements; with BAC/CAMG and with their partner. Conflict was specifically addressed in the case studies and all but one had experienced it, to some degree, although even the course team that had not experienced it (case study five) acknowledged the enormous potential for it. Two of the case study courses had institutional requirements that conflicted with BAC requirements. Two had difficulties with BAC/CAMG and two with their partner.

Although the question of conflict was not addressed specifically in the survey, the findings indicate that it was experienced, both in respect of difficulties with BAC/CAMG and with the partner. One survey respondent commented that ‘our partner co-ordinator approaches things in a very different manner’.

Sanctions

This area presented some difficulty for respondents. Eight percent of survey respondents and three of the case study course teams commented on the difficulties experienced, because CAMG provide no guidelines for courses if they find that their partner’s course is not being run satisfactorily. This is linked to the fact that no sanctions are specified for any course found not to be adhering to the partnership criteria; for example, not meeting at least once a year or not submitting the annual report to deadline (if at all). In the preliminary investigation, the CAMG partnership co-ordinator pointed out that they will

become more stringent in respect of insisting that annual report forms are in by the January deadline. However, no sanction has been specified for those who continue to submit late.

Value

The responses to this are mixed, depending upon which aspect of the scheme is being discussed. The majority of respondents found the scheme valuable as a supportive and/or developmental tool. Twelve percent of survey respondents (as previously mentioned) did point out, however, that they did not feel they had utilised the scheme properly because of the resource implications.

Monitoring was the aspect that was not seen as particularly valuable by a significant number of respondents. The accreditation services manager and partnership co-ordinator identified monitoring as of limited value, and so did 62 percent of survey respondents and at least one member of each case study course team.

Improvements

A number of common themes emerged from the findings in respect of possible improvements to the scheme. Firstly, respondents were unclear about their remit and require more comprehensive guidelines in order to fulfil their role as partner more competently. Secondly, it was suggested that monitoring should be dropped and that the partnership role be wholly supportive. Thirdly, respondents requested that attention should be paid to the difficulties experienced by participants in respect of financial/distance/time constraints. Fourthly, the annual report form could be improved by separating out questions not to do with partnership issues, for example listing staff changes.

Several of the case study courses suggested that BAC could introduce a system of networking, rather than restricting participants to a single partnership, which, as the course leader from case study two pointed out, would enable them to feel part of a whole wider community.

Summary

The literature goes some way towards analysing the BAC partnership scheme. Each aspect gives an insight into how the scheme matches up to best practice, as identified by other research findings.

The scheme demonstrates some of the traits identified in the partnership literature as being appropriate and is fairly effective. Some of the difficulties experienced by those partnerships examined in the literature are identifiable in the BAC scheme. In respect of mentoring, this is done fairly effectively, however, no training is offered to participants. Effectiveness in this role, as identified in the literature, is based on trust.

Accountability is problematic for the BAC scheme, particularly as participants are accountable to their own institutions and this can produce conflict. However, some of the scheme's procedures are in line with those suggested in the literature.

In respect of evaluation, although there is some good practice, this is an area of the scheme that does not fit with the supportive role. Furthermore, because of the limited amount of contact between partners, and between course teams and BAC/CAMG, the evaluation is not carried out appropriately.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The aim of the research was to determine the effectiveness of BAC's partnership scheme. The research questions designed to ascertain this were:

- What are the functions of the partnership scheme?
- Are they effective?
- Is the partnership scheme valued by the accredited courses?
- How can the partnership scheme be improved?

These questions were addressed using a number of different research methods. Initially, a preliminary investigation was undertaken, comprising interviews with the past and present partnership co-ordinator and the accreditation services manager, and documentary analysis of course information and annual report forms produced by the partnership co-ordinators. A pilot survey, main survey and five case studies followed this. The whole population of accredited courses who, by March 1998, were actively involved in the scheme were invited to take part in the research.

The experience of the respondents relates to all the research questions and will be discussed in the next section. The results of these experiences can further be related to the main concepts derived from the literature and linked to the development of a model for partnership activity.

Overview of findings

What are the functions of the partnership scheme?

The functions evolved over a period of time. At its inception the main functions were to provide support, prevent feelings of isolation and keep CAMG informed

about how the scheme was working in practice. As more and more courses became accredited, the scheme developed and procedures became more systematised. The current functions are identified as:

- Support and mentoring
- Developmental – both course and personal
- Monitoring
- Meeting BAC requirements, including re-accreditation

Are they effective?

Whether or not respondents regard these functions as effective depends, in part, on their experience of the scheme, although clear themes did emerge in certain areas. Type of experience does not appear to be determined by whether or not the course team's partner is from the same or different institutional context, or whether they operate from the same or different core theoretical model.

In respect of support and mentoring, the scheme was deemed effective when assessing the relationship between courses. Furthermore, even those course teams whose experience of the scheme is not positive could identify the potential of the support and mentoring function. However, the support provided by BAC/CAMG varied in its effectiveness, particularly in addressing issues highlighted in the annual report form and responding to some written enquiries.

The scheme is viewed as effective in encouraging course development at both strategic and operational levels. 61 percent of survey respondents and three of the case study course teams found the scheme very useful or useful for course development. Their comments suggest that it encourages a creative approach to the implementation of new ideas.

In respect of personal development, however, there are mixed views as to how satisfactory it is. 27 percent of survey respondents found it very useful or useful and 31 percent found it not useful. The main reasons cited for this are the lack of time partners spend together, because of finance and logistics, and that many

meetings are between the two course leaders and do not include the rest of the team.

Monitoring is an area viewed, almost unanimously, as less effective than the other functions of the scheme. Respondents attributed this to a number of reasons:

- BAC/CAMG provides insufficient guidance to enable participants to undertake the function satisfactorily;
- it conflicts with the support/mentoring aspect of the scheme;
- insufficient contact takes place between the majority of participants for monitoring to be carried out in sufficient depth.

Respondents found the scheme useful for addressing BAC recommendations and conditions and assisting with re-accreditation, which is linked to the support and mentoring function. Very little comment was made about monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and conditions, and the re-accreditation report, although where this was made it was not very positive.

Is the partnership scheme valued by the accredited courses?

At a strategic level the majority of respondents value the scheme. They recognise the benefits associated with bringing together course teams who offer a counselling training deemed to be of a certain standard. They further acknowledge the advantages of being able to meet and discuss issues with someone from outside their immediate context, who can empathise with their situation.

Operationally, however, some parts of the scheme are valued highly, whereas others are not. The supportive and developmental aspects are considered valuable, but the monitoring function is not.

How can the partnership scheme be improved?

Most of the respondents recognise the need to improve the scheme. Suggestions for this vary, although several themes emerge. Many believe that the monitoring function should be omitted from the scheme completely, to enable the supportive and mentoring functions to be carried out more effectively. The need to improve administrative support is also highlighted, particularly in respect of producing a more comprehensive set of guidelines for participants, and in dealing with queries.

Respondents also suggest that attention should be paid to the difficulties a large number of them experience when meeting their partnership obligations. Of particular concern is the cost, both financial and in time, involved in the annual consultations. Ideas put forward to address this include offering financial support, particularly to those in the private and not-for-profit sector, and partnering courses that are in close proximity to one another, although the potential issue of competition for students needs to be considered.

Main Concepts Derived from the Literature

The main concepts from the literature relate to the research findings and are linked to the development of the model for partnership activity.

Partnerships and the Partnership Scheme

Saunders and Stradling (1991) define six functions of partnerships: mediation and liaison, co-ordination, control, co-operation, allocation of resources and evaluation. They add that when some of these are being fulfilled then other, more strategic, functions emerge: leverage for whole-institutional change, facilitation of institutional self-evaluation, accountability and collective agenda setting.

Saunders and Stradling (1991) also put forward a model that identifies the four stages a partnership may go through, although some partnerships do not go through all stages. These stages are mobilisation, implementation, institutionalisation and self-sustaining continuity.

Linked to this is the model the FEU (1994) produced for effective partnerships. They also highlight those actions that need avoiding if a partnership is to be effective. Furthermore, in terms of a partnership being effective in an educational setting, Chadwick (1996) suggests that it is necessary for a framework for monitoring is established, that is flexible enough to accommodate necessary changes.

The Partnership Scheme

Some of the functions discussed by Saunders and Stradling (1991) can be identified in the partnership scheme:

Mediation and Liaison

There is little mediation throughout the scheme, although survey respondents pointed out that they would use their partner as complaints mediator, should a situation arise that needed it.

In respect of liaison, however, this is prevalent throughout the scheme. Partners liaise about issues surrounding the conditions and recommendations imposed when accredited. They also discuss course issues and help with re-accreditation. Course teams also liaise in writing with CAMG, in respect of annual report forms and the partner re-accreditation report.

Co-ordination

There is little co-ordination of activity, other than the partnership meetings.

Control

Control exists by virtue of the fact that accredited courses have to commit to the scheme, undertaking its requirements, and submit an annual report on partnership activity. Course leaders are also expected to submit a report when their partner

seeks re-accreditation. There is little control, however, within a partnership, although the monitoring function implies a degree of control.

Co-operation

An element of co-operation exists between all partners, in respect of finding meeting times. The supportive nature of the scheme involves co-operation and this is an aspect that was received favourably by most respondents. The exchange of course information and curriculum material, by a substantial number of courses, is also an indicator of co-operation between partners.

Allocation of resources

This aspect does not feature in the partnership scheme.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of the partnership scheme. The re-accreditation report is evaluative and the annual report form evaluates partnership activity and also allows respondents to make a general comment about the partnership activity.

Strategic Functions

As previously mentioned, these emerge when some of the above functions are met (Saunders and Stradling 1991):

Leverage for whole-institution change

The findings do not indicate that institutional change has taken place as a result of partnership activity, although potential conflicts between BAC accreditation requirements and institutional requirements were highlighted in case study 1 and case study 4.

Facilitating institutional self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is part of the partnership scheme, particularly in respect of whether recommendations and conditions following accreditation have been met. Partners help one another in addressing these and reviewing their successful implementation. Re-accreditation also involves self-evaluation and is a process designed to be supported by the course's partner.

Accountability

Courses are accountable to CAMG and work with their partner in order to meet demands placed on them. However, they are not accountable to one another.

Collective agenda-setting

Partnerships operate within a pre-established set of criteria and, therefore, do not engage in agenda setting at a high level. However, within this framework agenda setting takes place in respect of meetings between the partners.

Developmental Stages

The four developmental stages a partnership may go through (Saunders and Stradling 1991) apply, in part, to the partnership scheme:

Mobilisation is undertaken by the CAMG partnership co-ordinator, rather than the management of the participants. Implementation is the role of each course leader, who, liaising with their counterpart, will get the partnership underway. The findings highlight some difficulties at this stage and some partnerships took considerable time to become established.

Institutionalisation occurs when effective partnerships have been established for a number of years. It is not a stage that all participants have reached, or will ever reach. The final stage, self-sustaining continuity, is not one that relates well to the partnership scheme, since there is always some form of input from BAC/CAMG in respect of the implementation of new criteria or the re-accreditation process.

Effective Partnerships

The series of points produced by the FEU, designed to make partnerships more effective, relate to the BAC partnership scheme to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the participants and the operational requirements.

All participants have a clear objective for the collaboration; to meet the course accreditation criteria. They are also aware of what happens once the objectives have been achieved - re-accreditation and a change of partner (unless permission is granted to continue with the existing one). Furthermore, in the context of the scheme, the people involved in the collaboration are empowered to act.

The areas in which some work is needed are:

- ensuring there is no conflict of interest, which can be problematic if the intention is to reduce distance between partners, although the CAMG partnership co-ordinator does try to take this into account;
- ensuring that people are kept informed; problems with communication are highlighted;
- ensuring demonstrable accountability on both sides. CAMG have not made explicit the parameters of accountability between the partners and to BAC/CAMG.

Some aspects of the scheme's effectiveness depend on the individual participants. Being trustworthy is apparent in many but not all partnerships. Furthermore, the view that common sense should prevail is dependent on personalities; not only those who are partners, but also CAMG. The personalities involved also determine whether the importance of inter-personal skills in conducting collaborative arrangements is acknowledged.

Ineffective Partnerships

The FEU model also incorporates a number of ways to prevent a partnership from being ineffective. The findings highlight that BAC needs to take more account of these if the scheme is to be improved. There is an implicit assumption that

collaboration is a good thing, possibly because no alternative has been explored. Furthermore, the process is, by its very nature, lengthy and formal and this constrains participants. The findings suggest that participants rarely have the time to achieve more than the minimum requirements, despite having the desire to develop the relationship more fully.

Also, CAMG has not taken on board how influential personalities are in determining effectiveness. The success, or otherwise, of a partnership is closely linked to the personal relationship between the two course leaders. Finally, partnerships should not continue if they are not working, a point CAMG failed to deal with on a number of occasions. Unfortunately, because of the piecemeal approach to the allocation of partners, it is not always possible to re-allocate partners. This could be a factor influencing the reluctance of the CAMG partnership co-ordinator to deal with these issues.

The Future of Partnerships

Chadwick's (1996) view about the need for partnerships to have a flexible framework, is a point worth considering when reviewing the partnership scheme because it does not have an appropriate framework set up. Consideration should be given to the differing nature of the scheme's participants; some courses are run by experienced professionals and have been accredited for a number of years, whereas some are relatively new and have a less experienced course team. Further, consideration should be given to how course accreditation can be granted to those centres which franchise their courses, or which have courses running at a number of locations, without having to undergo the whole accreditation process for each one.

Mentoring and the Partnership Scheme

Mentoring is viewed as the pairing of people, from which professional development is facilitated. Maynard and Furlong (1994) put forward three models of mentoring, in order to capture the diverse contexts in which mentoring

takes place and the differing demands these place on those involved. The three models are:

- the apprenticeship model, where the mentee emulates the mentor;
- the competency based approach, where the mentor trains/coaches the mentee in specified competencies;
- the reflective model, where the mentor encourages critical reflection and becomes a 'co-enquirer'.

Other researchers point out that mentoring is an ongoing part of professional development (Coleman 1997, Parsloe 1995).

Once the mentoring relationship is established it is most effective when, as Parsloe (1995) highlights, the balance of personal qualities is right. Garvey (1994) puts forward a model of the dimensions contained within a mentoring relationship – the elements of which are points on a continuum:

- open/closed
- public/private
- formal/informal
- active/passive
- stable/unstable

It is recognised that effective mentors have certain qualities, as outlined by Berkeley (1994) in his model that identifies fourteen characteristics or roles of successful mentors.

Training is identified in the literature as being imperative for an effective mentoring programme. There are differing views, however, as to whether this should be generic or context specific and what the content should be. At its very basic level it is suggested that this should include an initial meeting at which time participants are given a guide for mentoring (Little 1995).

The Partnership Scheme

The mentoring role adopted by those in the partnership scheme matches one of those put forward by Maynard and Furlong (1994); the reflective model, which involves the mentor stimulating critical reflection and becoming a 'co-enquirer'. This is evident in both the survey and case study findings. A number of survey respondents and case study respondents commented on how useful discussions are in exploring issues, particularly when the partner has a different theoretical background.

As identified in the literature, the role of personalities is a key determinant of effectiveness. This is evidenced by the course leader from case study two, who mentioned that one of the reasons for the relationship with their partner being ineffective is because of a member of the partner course. Furthermore, the most effective partnerships are those in which both participants contribute equally and the personalities both trust and respect one another.

The model put forward by Garvey (1994), of the dimensions contained within mentoring relationships, usefully illustrates partnership relationships. All partnership relationships are public and formal. Many of them are open and active. The main difference is in the stability of each one, the driving force being whether there is commitment and trust, which is dependent on the personalities involved.

Those engaged in successful partnerships exhibit some of the characteristics or roles Berkeley (1994) highlights as identifiable in successful mentors. Participants were particularly effective at being supportive, promoting standards, bouncing ideas, problem solving and challenging.

As previously mentioned there is no training for those participating in the partnership scheme and the guidelines are minimal.

Accountability and The Partnership Scheme

Different definitions of accountability are put forward – either narrow, relating to sanctions if actions are not appropriate (Kogan 1986); or more broad, encompassing the relationships involved. It is further argued that accountability can be examined on two levels: simply holding someone to account or, at a higher level, examining the obligations accountability places on a participant (Sokkett 1980). Whichever definition is adopted, accountability involves legitimacy, sanctions and obligations.

Facets of Accountability

Three facets of accountability are identified by the East Sussex Accountability Project (1979): answerability to one's clients (moral accountability), responsibility to oneself and one's colleagues (professional accountability) and accountability to one's employers (contractual accountability). The two demands these three facets have to meet, maintenance and problem solving, are explored by Barton et al (1980) and led them to distinguish six different modes of accountability. These different facets can lead to conflict, both within and between them.

Accountability and Related Concepts

Links have been made between accountability and the concepts of responsiveness and responsibility. Scott (1989) argues that, within education, institutions are both responsive and accountable. His model identifies four aspects of this: political accountability, market accountability, professional responsibility and cultural responsibility.

Institutions are politically accountable for the management of the public funds they are allocated and to the government, in order for the national 'vision' to be met. Market accountability emphasises the role of the customer. Professional responsibility, as an alternative to market accountability, relates to the way in

which professionals respond to the needs of the students. Cultural responsibility refers to the allegiance institutions have to rationality, truth and knowledge.

In respect of responsibility, it is argued that this implies that behaviour is based on a moral sense of duty, without a legal or contractual requirement, unlike accountability. Others point out that there is a link between accountability and responsibility because it is not possible for a person/institution to be accountable if they are not responsible for, or have autonomy over, their actions. It is also put forward by Elliott (1980) that responsibility involves a person being open to other people's influence, if they can present a rational case for changing particular aspects of behaviour.

The Partnership Scheme

When relating the partnership scheme to the concepts involved in accountability, sanctions, legitimacy and obligations, the following is apparent. The scheme can be defined in line with the sanctions view; if requirements are not fulfilled sanctions are applied (Kogan 1986). The requirements in question are those relating to the course accreditation scheme. Accredited courses are accountable to CAMG for the maintenance of standards and are required to adhere to the partnership arrangement guidelines.

The concept of legitimacy is also prevalent in the partnership scheme. CAMG, as guardian of the course accreditation standard, is viewed as being entitled to know about what is happening in an accredited course. However, although participants may feel obligated to BAC, that is not the overriding factor making them comply with the scheme. A BAC accredited course has currency in the market place; particularly at a time when there is a proliferation of training courses and there is no standard by which potential applicants can judge their worth.

In respect of the facets of accountability, students' needs are addressed by accredited courses meeting the criteria set by CAMG. Course teams are also required to encourage students to take part in review and evaluation procedures. In relation to responsibility to colleagues, discussion of issues helps ensure

standards of performance are maintained and problems solved, as pointed out in both the survey and case studies.

Accountability to CAMG means ensuring that criteria are adhered to, with a view to maintaining standards, and reporting on an annual basis any issues that arise and the way they have been dealt with. In respect of the maintenance of standards the past CAMG co-ordinator pointed out that the partnership scheme:

‘has given credibility to the whole accreditation process, by ensuring that standards are kept.’

Conflict between the different facets of accountability (Elliott 1979) has arisen in the partnership scheme. When problems were experienced by the case study two course team, their partner chose not to inform CAMG (which the current case study two course leader was unhappy about); in effect placing professional accountability above contractual accountability.

Political accountability does not relate directly to the partnership scheme, although the host institution of those in the statutory sector is politically accountable to those government agencies providing statutory funding. There is an element of market accountability in the scheme. Although CAMG determines the standards, courses will not apply for accreditation if standards are not regarded as credible.

The professional responsibility model offers a useful way of describing the BAC partnership scheme. Participants are accountable to their students, to one another, to their partner course and to CAMG. This accountability is based on a set of shared values as to what constitutes good practice, as defined by the course accreditation scheme and with which they all agree.

Cultural responsibility is an appropriate model for examining the partnership scheme, in that participants share the basic ethos of the need for a high standard of counsellor training, irrespective of their core theoretical model. Institutions are responsive to developments and changes made by CAMG are adopted:

‘Our institution regards BAC very highly and they are very keen to ensure we are in line with BAC regulations.’

(case study 3)

Evaluation and the Partnership Scheme

Clemmett and Pearce (1986) identify several dimensions of evaluation. They link the summative outcomes with external evaluation and the formative ‘process-oriented’ evaluation with internal.

The purpose of effective evaluation is to create a context of shared understanding, enabling institutions to realise that there is a need for change (Nixon 1992). It links with strategic planning and is a value laden political process (Aspinwall et al 1992).

The Partnership Scheme

The different types of evaluation within the scheme fall into both approaches put forward by Clemmett and Pearce (1986). Evaluation by CAMG is summative and external, taking on all the characteristics of the ‘objectives approach’ put forward by Clemmett and Pearce (1986). Annual evaluation by the course conforms to the ‘process approach’. The partner report for re-accreditation is a mixture of the two approaches; it is summative but internal, case particular, informal and descriptive.

The purpose of having an evaluation component for courses participating in the partnership scheme is to enable CAMG to keep in touch with how the scheme is working and to help courses deal with issues as they arise, rather than waiting for five years until re-accreditation. It also provides a way to monitor whether conditions and recommendations are being addressed. This fits with Nixon’s (1992) view of the purpose of evaluation.

Partnership Activity in Counselling

Partnerships at BAC fall into one of four different contexts: same core theoretical model and institutional type; same core theoretical model and different institutional type; different core theoretical model and institutional type; different core theoretical model and same institutional type. Respondents highlight advantages and disadvantages with each combination, therefore, a generic model of partnership activity is put forward, which relates to some of the concepts explored in the literature and takes account of the relationship between BAC and each of the partners, and the partners themselves.

The findings also indicate that the monitoring function is problematic, and not as acceptable to participants as the other aspects. It is suggested, therefore, that BAC/CAMG develops an alternative way of auditing the scheme. The model for partnership activity, therefore, excludes peer evaluation, although the accountability of participants to BAC/CAMG, and evaluation of re-accreditation applications, remains integral.

Model for Partnership Activity

This model is based on the following four dimensions: partnership; mentoring and support; the relationship between the two partners; the relationship between BAC/CAMG and the course, the characteristics of which, outlined below, are present in effective partnership activity:

Partnership

1. A partnership should have clear objectives, set by BAC/CAMG, which include guidelines for behaviour.
2. Partnership allocation should take account of the personalities involved and the needs of each participant.

3. Partnerships, ideally, go through three stages, although some do not go any further than the 'establishing' or 'consolidating' stages:

Establishing – the initial stages of the relationship, during which time communication and the need for participants to be aware of differences in core theoretical model and institution type is important.

Consolidating – having established the relationship, the partnership goes through a phase of consolidation, during which time, trust and respect are established between the participants and they work towards the achievement of the partnership objectives.

Developmental – once partners trust one another, they are in the position of being able to develop themselves and their course in a context that is open, dynamic, safe and reflective.

Mentoring/Support

Peer mentoring is most appropriate for the partnership scheme's participants, and the characteristics of this relationship are:

1. Equal input from the participants.
2. Each participant viewed as a co-enquirer.
3. Critical reflection is encouraged.
4. Flexibility – to accommodate the limited amount of time spent in face-to-face communication and the possible differences between the partners.

Training should be offered to all participants, particularly in:

1. Interpersonal skills.
2. Dealing with differences.

3. Effective mentoring techniques.

Partner Relationships

The relationship between partners is critical to the scheme's success. Partners enter the relationship on an equal footing and must accept that philosophy. In order for the relationship to be productive, the following characteristics need to be evident:

1. Respect – for each other's core theoretical model, institutional setting and any other areas of difference.
2. Trust – to enable open and constructive discussion in a safe environment.
3. Empathy – for the situation of the partner.
4. Support – of the partner course, in all aspects of their work.
5. Flexibility – to accommodate differences and difficulties experienced.
6. Critical reflection – by both participants, with a view to developing the structure and content of course.
7. Dynamic – courses should seek to develop rather than remain static.

BAC/CAMG Relationship with Participants

The relationship between BAC/CAMG and the scheme's participants is dependent upon a number of factors for it to be effective:

1. Efficient and responsive administrative support.

2. The production of comprehensive guidelines specifying requirements, administrative procedures, sanctions for non-compliance and appeals procedure.
3. Flexibility of BAC/CAMG – taking account, where possible, of the demands of the participant's host institution.
4. Professional support from BAC/CAMG.
5. Fair and objective assessment of re-accreditation applications.

Figure 8.1 draws these components together

The model illustrates how, following appropriate inputs and processes, a partnership will be effective. An ineffective partnership can be the result of incorrect inputs and/or processes. If, for example, partners are not allocated systematically and no attention is paid to the personalities involved, then difficulties may arise. Furthermore, without clear objectives, set out in the form of guidelines, a partnership may flounder. Lack of training may also lead to partnerships being less effective.

In respect of the process component of the model, partnerships will not be so effective if these are not developed fully. A partnership at the establishing stage is not so effective as one at the developmental stage. Furthermore, a partnership in which the mentoring and support is not based on equal input, critical reflection and flexibility, will be less successful. This is also true of the components relating to the partner relationship and the relationship between BAC/CAMG and the participants.

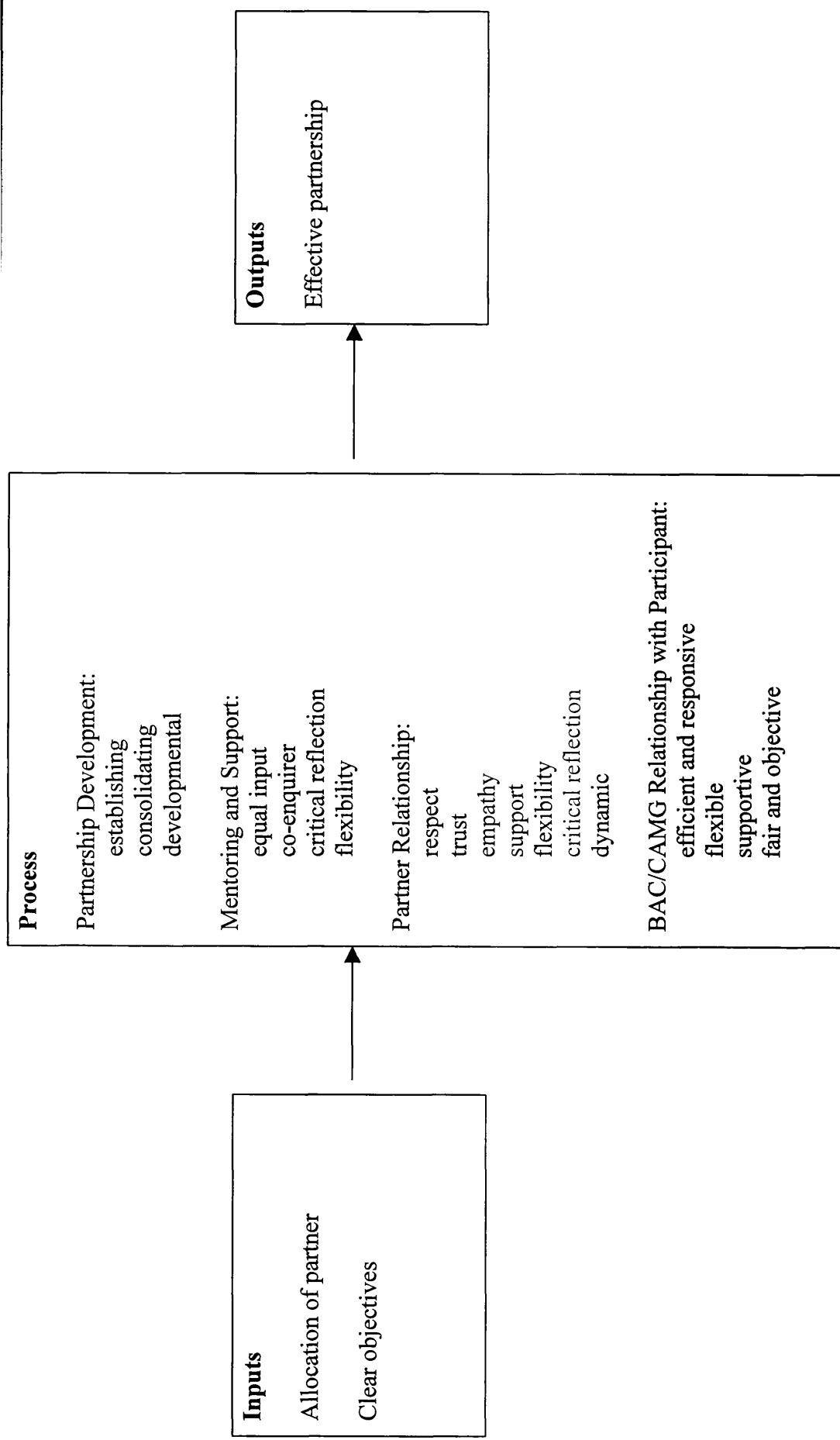


Figure 8.1: Model of Partnership Activity

Recommendations for Change

Changes to both the structure and process of the BAC partnership scheme need considering. Any change to the structure will inevitably have implications for the process and these too need addressing.

Structure

Based on findings from the research it is recommended that one of two options are considered:

The first option is to remove the monitoring function from the partnership scheme. Monitoring will remain a function of BAC, however, by removing it as one of the purposes of the partnership scheme it would address the problems associated with the monitoring aspect of the scheme, in terms of peer evaluation. This will then enable the partners to focus on support, mentoring, areas of development and preparing for re-accreditation, in a more effective way. This will not have any implications for the accountability function of the scheme, which remains an integral part of the relationship between BAC/CAMG and individual participants. Furthermore, this option does not tackle the other issues emanating from the evidence, that is the financial burden placed on participants, the logistical difficulties in setting up meetings and the profound effect personalities have on the success, or otherwise, of a partnership. However, if this option is taken, changes in the process (see below) may alleviate some of these difficulties.

The second option is to discontinue the scheme as it is and replace it with a system of networking. It is suggested that a series of regional network meetings be held three times a year and each accredited course team must commit to sending a representative to at least two. This option is drawn from ideas put forward by the course leaders from case studies one and two, and addresses all the main issues. It will reduce the impact individuals have on the effectiveness of the scheme, remove the peer evaluation, ease logistical difficulties (because meetings

will be regional and participants can choose which ones to attend) and reduce the administrative burden participants face when arranging consultations.

Process

The recommendations relating to process are only applicable if option one is followed (or if the structure of the scheme is unchanged). It is recommended that:

1. Comprehensive guidelines for participants are produced, which specify requirements, administrative procedures, sanctions for non-compliance and appeals policy.
2. The selection of partners is undertaken in a systematic way, with consideration being given to logistical and financial implications.
3. A bursary scheme, to subsidise travel expenses, is introduced and awarded to those meeting set criteria (to be determined).
4. BAC employs an officer to take over the administration of the scheme.
5. The annual report form is rewritten to make it more relevant to partnership activity.
6. The employed officer is responsible for receiving the annual report forms and producing an analytical report of the partnership activity.

The recommendation for guidelines is designed to address the uncertainty experienced by the scheme's participants in respect of their remit and to clarify procedures for dealing with difficulties. The systematic selection of partners, and the introduction of a bursary scheme to fund travel, are intended to ease the financial and logistical burdens experienced by participants. The employment of a paid officer is recommended to allow a more responsive approach to be taken, whereby difficulties and enquiries are dealt with immediately.

The change in the annual report form would make it relate specifically to partnership activity and reduce the annual duplication of effort, which occurs at present because of the inclusion of questions relating to recommendations and/or conditions imposed at the onset of accreditation. Finally, by ensuring the employed officer produces the composite report, consistency will be maintained and closer monitoring of its content can take place.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study can be assessed at two levels. At one level there is the importance of the research for BAC as an organisation. At another level there is the importance of the study generally, in the context of partnerships. There are also limitations to a study such as this.

BAC

For BAC the study is important and timely. Its importance lies in its originality. No other research has previously been undertaken in this area because of the resource implications, despite the fact that a need had been identified from BAC's Management Committee, the Accreditation Committee and CAMG. It is timely because the accreditation process is undergoing review, following the appointment in July 1999 of a head of accreditation, in order to have a robust and transparent system in place that stands up to external scrutiny, which is very important if statutory regulation is imposed in the next few years.

Furthermore, the findings provide a legitimate base from which both structure and process can be revised. The identification of problems associated with combining support and mentoring with monitoring, and the fact that personalities are so influential, is of particular importance to BAC, a membership organisation in which so much is developed through a process of consultation and negotiation.

The study also provides a useful model for partnership activity, within the course accreditation context, which can be used to assess the effectiveness of future activity.

General significance

The study is significant because it offers a model of partnership activity not discussed in previous literature. This model allows for a number of concurrent relationships and recognises the potential for conflict between them. Previous literature identified different components in isolation from one another – partnerships, mentoring, accountability and evaluation. An examination of these components together was only prompted by the uniqueness of the partnership scheme. This led to the identification of problems that might be encountered when the components of a partnership are mutually exclusive.

Limitations

There are also some methodological limitations, in particular the fact that not all institutional settings are represented in the case studies. The further education and private sectors are not represented because of availability and the fact that one participant withdrew. However, the overall findings indicate that institutional context is not paramount in determining the effectiveness of a partnership, unlike the influence of personalities.

Summary

The aim of the research, to evaluate the effectiveness of the BAC partnership scheme, has been met. The research questions were appropriately framed to enable a detailed examination of the scheme and the findings provide a base from which further developmental work can take place. This is particularly important, because BAC is currently undergoing a number of fundamental strategic changes. An important development is that individual accreditation is being aligned with membership categories. Furthermore, a number of accredited courses are being given the franchise to accredit their past students (providing they meet the criteria). There is a need, therefore, for all aspects of course accreditation, including partnerships, to be developed strategically in order to meet the changing needs of the Association.

REFERENCES

- ACKER, S. (1989), **Teachers, Gender and Careers**, Lewes, Falmer Press
- ASPINWALL, K., SIMKINS, T., WILKINSON, J. and McCAULEY, H. (1992), **Managing Evaluation in Education**, London, Routledge
- AUSTIN, M. and MacMANUS, B.R. (1994), 'The Interface Between Higher and Further Education', **Insights into Education and Training**, London, Heineman
- AUSTIN, M. (1991), 'Partnership 16-19: possibilities and pitfalls', GIBBS, B., HEDGE, R. and CLOUGH, E. (Eds), **The Reality of Partnership**, Harlow, Longman
- BALL, S.J., VINCENT, C. and RADNOR, H. (1997), 'Into confusion: LEAs, accountability and democracy', **Journal of Education Policy** Vol 12 No 3 pp147-163
- BARTON, J., BECHER, T., CANNING, T., ERAUT, E. and KNIGHT, J. (1980), 'Accountability and Education', BUSH, T., GLATTER, R., GOODEY, J. and RICHES, C., **Approaches to School Management**, London, Harper and Row pp 98-120
- BASTIANI, J. (1993), 'Parents as partners: genuine progress or empty rhetoric?', MUNN, P. (Ed) **Parents and Schools: customers, managers of partners?**, London, Routledge
- BECHER, T., ERAUT, J., CANNING, T., ERAUT, E. and KNIGHT, J. (1979), **Accountability in the Middle Years of Schooling**, Working Papers, Final Report to the Social Science Research Council (Sussex Report)
- BERKELEY, J. P. (1994), 'Young People Mentoring: An Employment Perspective', **Education and Training**, Vol 36 No 5 pp27-31
- BOLAM, R. (1995), 'Mentoring for new headteachers: recent British experience', **Journal of Educational Administration**, Vol 33 No 5 pp 29-44
- BRADY, L. (1993), 'Intervisitation and mentoring: Professional development for principals', **Journal of Curriculum Studies**, Vol 25 No 4 pp371-375
- BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR COUNSELLING (1996), **Recognition of Counsellor Training Courses**, Rugby, BAC
- BROOKS, V. (1996), 'Mentoring: the interpersonal dimension', **Teacher Development**, February, pp 5-10
- BROWN, S. and KNIGHT, P. (1994), 'Assessing Learners in Higher Education', STEPHENSON, J. (Ed) **Teaching and Higher Education Series**, London: Kogan Page

- BURGESS, T. (1992), 'Accountability with Confidence', BURGESS, T. (Ed), **Accountability in Schools**, Harlow, Longman
- BUSH, T. (1994), 'Accountability in education', BUSH T. and WEST-BURNHAM, J., **The Principles of Educational Management**, Harlow, Longman
- BUSH, T. (1995), 'Mentoring for principals: pre-service and in-service models', **Singapore Journal of Education**, Vol 15 No 1 pp1-13
- BUSH, T., COLEMAN, M. and GLOVER, D. (1993), **Managing Autonomous Schools: The Grant Maintained Experience**, London, Paul Chapman
- CHADWICK, S. (1996), 'Strategic Future', **Education**, 29 March
- CLEMMETT, A.J. and PEARCE, J.S. (1986), **The Evaluation of Pastoral Care**, Oxford, Blackwell
- CLIFT, P., NUTTALL, D. and McCORMICK, R. (1987), **Studies in School Self-Evaluation**, London, The Falmer Press
- CLUTTERBUCK, D. (1991), **Everyone Needs a Mentor**, 2nd ed., London, Institute of Personnel Management
- COHEN, L. and MANION, L. (1994), **Research Methods in Education**, 4th ed., London, Routledge
- COLEMAN, M. (1997), 'Managing induction and mentoring', BUSH, T. and MIDDLEWOOD, D. (Eds), **Managing People in Education**, Paul Chapman Publishing
- COOPERS and LYBRAND (1988), **Local Management of Schools – A Report to the Department of Education and Science**, HMSO
- COX, M. (1997), 'Walking the Tightrope: The Role of Mentoring in Developing Educators as Professionals' MULLEN, C., COX, M.D., BOETTCHER, C.K. and ADOUE, D.S., **Breaking the Circle of One**, London, Peter Lang Publishing
- DARESH, J. and PLAYKO, M. (1992), 'Mentoring for headteachers: a review of major issues', **School Organisation**, Vol 12 No 2 pp145-152
- EAST SUSSEX ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT (1979), **Accountability in the Middle Years of Schooling; An Analysis of Policy Options**, Brighton, University of Sussex, mimeograph
- EDWARDS, W. (1991), 'Accountability and autonomy: dual strands for the administrator', WALKER, W., FARQUHAR, R. and HUGHES, M., **Advancing Education: School Leadership in Action**, Lewes, The Falmer Press

ELLIOTT, J. (1979), 'Self-Accounting Schools: are they possible', **Education Analysis**, Vol 1 No 1 pp67-71

FIDLER, B. (1994), 'Telephone Interviewing', BENNETT, N., GLATTER, R. and LEVACIC, R., **Improving Educational Management through Research and Consultancy**, London, Paul Chapman

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT (1994), **Approaches to Partnerships, Who Shares Wins**, FEU

GALLACHER, N. (1995), 'Partnerships in Education', MACBETH, A., McCREATH, D. and AITCHISON, J., **Collaborate or Compete; Education Partnerships in a Market Economy**, Lewes, Falmer Press

GARVEY, B. (1995), 'Healthy signs for mentoring', **Education and Training**, Vol 37 No 5 pp12-19

GARVEY, B. (1994), 'A Dose of Mentoring', **Education and Training**, Vol 36 No 4 pp18-26

GAY, B. (1994), 'What is Mentoring?', **Education and Training**, Vol 36 No 5 pp4-7

GAY, B. and STEPHENSON, J. (1998), 'The mentoring dilemma: guidance and/or direction?', **Mentoring and Tutoring**, Vol 6 No 1-2 pp43-54

GILBERT, N. (1993), **Researching Social Life**, London, Sage Publications

HAMILTON, D. (1976), **Curriculum Evaluation**, London, Open Books

HANKEY, J. (1999), 'A Staff Development Project: Peer Mentoring, Self Assessment and Reflective Practice', **NASD Journal**, Vol 40 pp35-40

HARLEN, W. and ELLIOTT, J. (1982), 'A checklist for Planning or Reviewing an Evaluation', McCORMICK, R., BYNNER, J. and CLIFT, P. **Calling Education to Account**, London, Heineman

HOINVILLE, R. and JOWELL, R. (1978), **Survey Research Practice**, London, Heineman

HOUSE, E. (1983), **School Evaluation, The Politics and Process**, Berkeley, CA McCutchen Publishing Corporation

JOHNSON, D. (1994), **Research Methods in Educational Management**, Harlow, Longman

JONES, L., REID, D. and BEVINS, S. (1997), 'Teachers' Perceptions of Mentoring in a Collaborative Model of Initial Teacher Training', **Journal of Education for Teaching**, Vol 23 No 3 pp253-261

JOWETT, V. and STEAD, R. (1994), 'Mentoring Students in Higher Education', **Education and Training**, Vol 36 No 5 pp20-26

KELLY, A.V. (1992), **The Curriculum: Theory and Practice**, London, Paul Chapman

KELLY, G. (1955), **The Psychology of Personal Constructs**, New York, Norton

KIRK, G. (1995), 'Teacher Education: Changing partnerships', MACBETH, A., McCREATH, D. and AITCHISON, J. (Eds), **Collaborate or Compete; Educational Partnerships in a Market Economy**, Lewes, Falmer Press

KOGAN, M. (1986), **Education Accountability**, London, Hutchinson

KOGAN, M., JOHNSON, D., PACKWOOD, T. and WHITAKER, T. (1984), **School Governing Bodies**, London, Heinemann

KRAM, K. E. and BRAGAR, M. C. (1991), 'Career Development through Mentoring. A Strategic Approach for the 1990s', **Mentoring International**, Vol 5 Nos 1-2

LeCOMPTE, M.D. and GOETZ, J.P. (1982) 'Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research', **Review of Educational Research**, Vol 52 No 1 pp 31-60

LEECH, M. (1995), 'Further Education and the School: Federalism and Partnership', **Collaborate or Compete; Educational partnerships in a Market Economy**, Lewes, Falmer Press

LITTLE, B. (1995), 'Mentoring in Higher Education: a synoptic overview', **Mentoring and Tutoring**, Vol 3 No 2 pp19-20

LOFTHOUSE, M., BUSH, T., COLEMAN, M., O'NEILL, J., WEST-BURNHAM, J. and GLOVER, D. (1995), **Managing the Curriculum**, London, Pitman Publishing

MACBETH, A. (1995), **Collaborate or Compete: Education Partnerships in a Market Economy**, Lewes, Falmer Press

MAYNARD, T. and FURLONG, J. (1994), 'Teachers' expertise and models of mentoring', McINTYRE, D., HAGGER, H. and WILKIN, M. (Eds) **Perspectives on School-Based Teacher Education**, London, Kogan Page

McCORMICK, R. and JAMES, M. (1984) **Curriculum Evaluation in Schools**, London, Croom Helm

McNEILL, P. (1990), **Research Methods**, London, Routledge

- MITCHELL, P. (1995), 'Accountability and the professional environment of teachers', MCKENZIE, P., MITCHELL, P. and OLIVER, P., **Competence & Accountability in Education**, Arena
- MUNRO-FAURE, L. and MUNRO-FAURE, M. (1992), **Implementing Total Quality Management**, London, Pitman
- MURRAY, M. (1991), **Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring**, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA
- NIXON, J. (1992), **Evaluating the Whole Curriculum**, Milton Keynes, Open University Press
- PARSLOE, E. (1995), **Coaching Mentoring and Assessing**, London, Kogan Page
- PATTON, M.Q. (1987), **How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation**, Newbury Park, Sage Publications
- PETCH, P. (1992), 'Theory and Practice', BURGESS, T. (Ed), **Accountability in Schools**, Harlow, Longman
- PLATT, J. (1981), 'Evidence and proof in documental research. Some specific problems of documentary research', **Social Review**, Vol 29 No 1 pp31-52
- POND, K., UL-HAQ, R. and WADE, W. (1995), 'Peer Review: A Precursor to Peer Assessment', **Innovations in Education and Training International**, Vol 34 No 4 pp314-323
- PREEDY, M. (Ed) (1989), **Approaches to Curriculum Management**, Milton Keynes, Open University Press
- PUGH, G. (1989), 'Parents and Professionals in Pre-School Services: Is partnership Possible?', WOLFENDALE, S. (Ed), **Parental Involvement: Developing New Networks Between Schools, Home and Community**, Cassell
- ROBSON, C. (1993), **Real World Research**, Oxford, Blackwell
- ROLPH, J. and ROLPH, P. (1989), 'Evaluating Courses', **Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education**, Vol. 14 No 2 pp117-131
- SALLIS, J. (1979), 'Beyond the market place: a parent's view', LELLO, J. (Ed), **Accountability in Education**, London, Ward Lock
- SALLIS, J. (1988), **Schools, Parents and Governors: A New Approach to Accountability**, London, Routledge
- SAMPSON, J. and YEOMANS, R. (1994), 'Implications for primary school-based teacher education', YEOMANS, R. and SAMPSON, J. (Eds) **Mentorship in the Primary School**, Lewes, Falmer Press

SAUNDERS, L. and STRADLING, B. (1991), **TVEI and the Management of Change: An Overview**, Slough, NFER

SCHWAB, J. (1970), 'The Practical: A Language for Curriculum', SCHWAB, J. (1978), **Science, Curriculum and Liberal Education**, University of Chicago Press

SCOTT, J. (1990), **A Matter of Record**, Cambridge, Polity Press

SCOTT, P. (1989), 'Accountability, responsiveness and responsibility', GLATTER, R. (Ed), **Educational Institutions and their Environments: Managing the Boundaries**, Milton Keynes, The Open University Press

SELLITZ, C. et al (1965), **Research Methods in Social Relations**, London, Methuen

SOCKETT, H. (1980), 'Accountability: The contemporary issues', SOCKETT, H. (Ed), **Accountability in the English Educational System**, Hodder and Stoughton

SOUTHWORTH, G. (1987), 'The experience of fieldwork: or insider dealings, who profits', **The Cambridge Journal of Education**, Vol 17 No 2 pp 86-88

STEVENS, P.J.M., SCHADE, A.L., CHALK, B. and SLEVIN O.D'A. (1993), **Understanding Research**, Edinburgh, Campion Press

SUFFOLK EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (1985), **Those Having Torches...Teacher Appraisal: A Study**, Suffolk Education Department

WARWICK, D. (1995), 'Schools and Business', MACBETH, A., McCREATH, D. and AITCHISON, J. (Eds), **Collaborate or Compete; Educational Partnerships in a Market Economy**, Lewes, Falmer Press

WATTS, M. and EBBUTT, D. (1987), 'More than the sum of the parts: research methods in group interviewing', **British Educational Research Journal**, Vol 13 No 1 pp 25-34

WEST-BURNHAM, J. (1994), 'Inspection, evaluation and quality assurance', BUSH, T. and WEST-BURNHAM, J. (Eds), **The Principles of Educational Management**, Harlow, Longman

WHITE, G.R. (1994), 'partnership, Mentoring and Competencies in Teacher Education', **Scottish Educational Review**, Vol 26 No 2 pp143-50

WICKS, S. (1992), 'Peer Review and Quality Control in Higher Education', **British Journal of Educational Studies**, Vol XXXX No 1 pp 57-68

WISEMAN, D. (1997), 'Patterns of Mentoring: Weaving Teacher Educators' Career Stories', MULLEN, C., COX, M.D., BOETTCHER, C.K. and ADOUE, D.S., **Breaking the Circle of One**, London, Peter Lang Publishing

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW – PAST PARTNERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

- 1. What was the original purpose of the partnership scheme?**
- 2. What influenced your choice of methodology?**
- 3. When you were partnership co-ordinator, how did the process operate?**
- 4. Did you encounter any difficulties/problems with the administration of the scheme?**
- 5. What were the benefits of the scheme?**
- 6. How influential were the partnership reports in the re-accreditation process?**
- 7. What is your overall opinion of the scheme?**
- 8. Are there any specific areas you would like to see this research address?**

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW – ACCREDITATION SERVICES MANAGER

- 1. What is the purpose of the partnership scheme?**
- 2. How does the process operate?**
- 3. Do you encounter any difficulties/problems with the administration of the scheme?**
- 4. What are the benefits of the scheme?**
- 5. What part does it play in the reaccreditation process?**
- 6. What is your overall opinion of the scheme?**

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – PARTNERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

- 1. What is the purpose of the partnership scheme?**
- 2. How does the process operate?**
- 3. Do you encounter any difficulties/problems with the administration of the scheme?**
- 4. What are the benefits of the scheme?**
- 5. How influential are the partnership reports in the re-accreditation process?**
- 6. What is your overall opinion of the scheme?**
- 7. Are there any specific areas you would like to see this research address?**

RESEARCH INTO PARTNERSHIP SCHEME [PILOT]

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1 - Structure

Name of institution _____

Type of institution [*please circle*]

Private

FE

HE

Name of course _____

Name of course leader _____

How many full time staff in course team _____

How many part-time staff - give number of hours for each, and whether a contracted proportion of full time e.g. 0.2.

Staff	No. of hours	Contract

Staff	No. of hours	Contract

Date of BAC accreditation on Certificate of Accreditation [formally Recognition]

Date(s) of BAC re-accreditation [formally Re-recognition]

Name of partner _____

Date partnership commenced _____

Core theoretical model of:

your course _____

your partner's course _____

Section 2 - Purpose

How useful has the partnership been in terms of:
[Please tick box and add further comments if you wish]

	Very Useful	Useful	Fairly Useful	Of Limited Use	Not Useful
Addressing BAC recommendations/ conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Offering you support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments:

Providing a mentor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments:

Promoting development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments:

Very
Useful

Useful

Fairly
Useful

Of
Limited
Use

Not
Useful

Monitoring activity

Comments:

Section 3 – Process

List the dates, number of students / staff present and duration of your partnership meetings:

Date	Staff	Students	Duration

Date	Staff	Students	Duration

What problems, if any, have you experienced when organising these meetings?

Excel

Good

Fair

Poor

**Very
Poor**

*[please tick box and add further comments if
you wish]*

Has the support received from the partnership
co-ordinator been

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Has the support from the BAC office
been

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Is the structure of the annual report form

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Are the questions asked in the annual report
form

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
3. Describe your partner's involvement in your re-accreditation (if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

4. Describe the content of the report sent by your partner for your re-accreditation (if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments:

Section 4 – Outcomes

What value would you place on the partnership scheme, in terms of:
[please tick box and add further comments if you wish]

	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
5. The time involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

6. The financial cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments:

Excel

Good

Fair

Poor

**Very
Poor**

27. The effort involved

Comments:

28. What are the benefits of being partnered with a course which has a different core theoretical model
(if relevant)

29. What are the disadvantages of being partnered with a course which has a different core theoretical model
(if relevant)

30. What are the benefits of being partnered with a course of the same core theoretical model
(if relevant)

31. What are the disadvantages of being partnered with a course of the same core theoretical model
(if relevant)

. AAs course leader what value do you place on the partnership scheme for both you and your course

. VWhat improvements, if any, would you suggest for the current partnership scheme

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

RESEARCH INTO BAC PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

Section 1 - Structure

1. Type of institution [*please circle*]

Private	FE	HE	Other (Specify)
---------	----	----	--------------------
2. Name of course _____
3. Is the course full-time or part-time? _____
4. How many full time staff in the course team? _____
5. How many part-time staff in the course team? _____
6. Length of partnership (years/months) _____
7. Core theoretical model of:

your course	_____
your partner's course	_____

Section 2 - Purpose

8. Explain your understanding of the purpose of the partnership scheme

How useful has the partnership been in terms of:
[please tick box and add further comments if you wish]

	Very Useful	Useful	Fairly Useful	Of Limited Use	Not Useful
A Addressing BAC recommendations/ c conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C Comments:

S Supporting/mentoring each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

C Comments:

M Monitoring each others courses (i.e.g. curriculum, staffing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

C Comments:

E Encouraging course development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

C Comments:

Very
Useful

Useful

Fairly
Useful

Of
Limited
Use

Not
Useful

Encouraging personal development for course
teams

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Assisting in re-accreditation
(if relevant)

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Section 3 – Process

0. When establishing your partnership, was the support you received from the Courses Accreditation
Management Group (CAMG) partnership co-ordinator:

Excel

Good

Fair

Poor

Very
Poor

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

1. a) On average, how many meetings do you and your partner have per year? _____

b) Give details of any exceptions to this pattern over the last 3 years _____

2. a) How many staff and students are usually involved in these meetings?

Staff

Students

1b) Give details of any exceptions to this pattern over the last 3 years _____

3. What problems, if any, have you experienced when organising these meetings?

4. Other than meetings and related activities, what other activities do you and your partner engage in, and how often?

Activity	Yes/No	Times per Year (on average)
Exchange of Letters		
Telephone Calls		
Exchange of Course information		
Exchange of Curriculum Material		
Acting as Complaints Mediator		
Other (please specify)		

5. What problems/issues, if any, have you encountered, which prohibits your partnership from running smoothly?

Excel Good Fair Poor Very Poor

6. If you have been in contact with the BAC office, regarding partnership issues, was the support offered:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Comments:

Excel

Good

Fair

Poor

**Very
Poor**

If you have been in contact with the CAMG partnership co-ordinator (other than when establishing the partnership) was the support offered:

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Excel

Good

Fair

Poor

**Very
Poor**

How is the structure of the annual report form:

☐☐☐☐☐

Comments:

Excel

Good

Fair

Poor

**Very
Poor**

Are the questions asked in the annual report form:

☐☐☐☐☐

(ii) Give details of any questions you would like to see left out:

(iii) Give details of any questions you would like added:

	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
0. Describe your partner's involvement in your re-accreditation (if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

	Excel	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
1. Describe the content of the report sent by your partner for your re-accreditation (if relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Section 4 – Outcomes

Rate the partnership scheme in terms of value, with regard to:
[please tick box and add further comments if you wish]

	Very High	High	Fairly High	Low	Very Low
2. The time and effort involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Very
High

High

Fairly
High

Low

Very
Low

3. The financial cost, if any,
(e.g. travel, loss of income)

Comments:

Questions 24 - 31

Please answer only those which relate to your partnership

4. What are the benefits of being partnered with a course which has a different core theoretical model?

5. What are the disadvantages of being partnered with a course which has a different core theoretical model?

Questions 24 – 31

Please answer only those which relate to your partnership

What are the benefits of being partnered with a course of the same core theoretical model?

What are the disadvantages of being partnered with a course of the same core theoretical model?

What are the benefits of being partnered with a course which has a different organisational context
e.g. size of course, type of institution?

What are the disadvantages of being partnered with a course which has a different organisational context
e.g. size of course, type of institution?

Questions 24 – 31

Please answer only those which relate to your partnership

What are the benefits of being partnered with a course which has the same organisational context
e.g. size of course, type of institution?

What are the disadvantages of being partnered with a course which has the same organisational context
e.g. size of course, type of institution?

What value do you place on the partnership scheme for both you and your course?

What improvements, if any, would you suggest for the current partnership scheme?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – CASE STUDY COURSE TEAMS

1. What do you think is the purpose of the partnership scheme?
2. In relation to this purpose, how useful is it?
3. Describe the process involved in getting your partner. Were there any problems?
4. Describe your partnership, in terms of:
 - Trust
 - Relationships
 - Communication
 - Conflicts
5. Describe your relationship with BAC/CAMG, in terms of:
 - Setting up the partnership
 - Any queries
 - Annual report form – content/structure/requirements
6. In your opinion, what are the main benefits of the partnership scheme?
7. In your opinion, what are the main disadvantages of the partnership scheme?
8. Are there any other comments you would like to make?