EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

EDITED BY LORRAINE STEFANI

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Academic Development

How can academic developers provide evidence of the effectiveness and 'added value' of their work to the key stakeholders within their institutions?

Written for academic developers, academic administrators and others responsible for promoting organizational change, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Academic Development* is a professional guide that shares best practice advice and provides developers with useful frameworks for effective evaluation and monitoring of their work.

Through case studies and up-to-date examples from experts in the field, this collection explores the nuances of evaluative practice and the tensions inherent in claiming a causal link between academic development and organizational transformation. As higher education institutions continue to seek effective ways to determine the impact of academic development on organizational transformation in general and student learning in particular, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Academic Development* is sure to be an invaluable resource.

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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Academic Development

Principles and Practice

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Foreword

A few months ago I was at a conference on student learning where I met an academic I hadn't seen for over 15 years. He seemed especially pleased to see me. 'You know', he said, 'you changed my life!' Smiling and nodding, he told others around him: 'I wouldn't be here today if it hadn't been for her.' I'm not telling this brief tale to blow my own trumpet. This is what academic developers do. They change people's lives. Many, if not most, could probably tell a similar story. The normal business of academic developers is to bring about change. Yet this kind of transformation is not captured in institutional measures, evaluations and reports of effectiveness. Academic development is an altruistic pursuit, often going unrecognised and unrewarded. But the effects on individual academics can be profound.

In the changing and changed context of higher education, academic development has steadily developed its profile. Many, if not most, universities now boast an academic development centre. Many of these are located outside of faculties and report directly to senior personnel, but increasingly we are seeing the growth of centres located in specific faculties as well as a growth in specialist centres with a focus on, for example, assessment, research-based learning, elearning, etc.

Critical reflection on practice has made important contributions to moving forward the field of academic development. We now know much about how to engage academics, how to link with strategic priorities of institutions and about the wide variety of types of development available. There is increasing use of evidence-based practice, a substantial literature specifically on academic development and the development of professional organisations for academic developers. Through organisations such as the International Consortium of Educational Development (ICED), academic developers are now linked in international networks of like-minded people with similar commitments and focus, carrying out similar work across numerous nations. All of this attests to academic development being now a mature profession. Yet it is a curious one. Unlike many other professions, the specialist skills, values, and attributes that are required to carry out the job of an academic developer with integrity and commitment are not well recognised within the community, even and especially the academic community.

A consequence is that there is frequently a conflict between the evaluation strategies required by institutions and those that adhere to academic development values and notions of good practice. In this context, how academic development is to be evaluated has become one of the most pressing problems

confronting it today. The importance of robust and compelling evidence of effectiveness has become a mantra. Evaluation in relation to academic development work is, however, multi-layered and multi-faceted. Evaluating academic development is highly problematic. This book highlights the tensions and complexities in negotiating this terrain and, as such, goes to the heart of fundamental dilemmas in academic development practice.

Academic developers are balanced on a knife-edge of what practices are in line with their academic development values on the one hand and what is in the interests of others, for example university managers, on the other. The very survival of academic development centres depends on currying favour with those in power.

To their core commitment to improving higher education, adherence to a set of altruistic values, academic integrity and an ethic of 'usefulness', academic developers have, in the last 20 years or so, had to add furtherance of the institutional mission, assistance with the institutional strategic and teaching and learning plan and responsiveness to the demands of senior managers. These managers can make or break an academic unit, and indeed the careers of developers, so they are important as stakeholders. Yet their demands can be at odds with the needs and desires of disciplinary academics with whom developers may be more in sympathy. The academic developer may be caught in the middle. Examples of this are how developers negotiate the territory between enhancement and judgement in the implementation and support of institutional evaluation strategies, or how academic developers respond to requests from heads of department to 'develop' academics identified as poor teachers. How they negotiate this space and demonstrate their own effectiveness is complex and challenging. This means that demands are placed on them which are unknown in faculties, such as the high levels of surveillance over what they do, often accompanied by continual critical questioning of their very existence. So, although developing high standards of professionalism, academic developers are often working in contexts which are just as likely to diminish, misunderstand or negate their expertise as they are to honour and reward it.

Institutional expectations and demands in relation to the evaluation of academic development practices, often expressed in the views of senior personnel, can seem to be in line with developers' best intentions, while at the same time neglecting the exigencies of the role. An example of this is in relation to changes in students' experiences and outcomes. In line with the orientation of this book, I have been talking of academic development in the sense of focusing on changing academics; not in the sense of students' academic development as it is seen in some countries. Yet a key issue is whether evaluation should focus on changes in the student experience demonstrated through student questionnaires and the like. The argument broadly goes that if many academic development practices are focused on improving teaching, surely the effects on students' learning will demonstrate effectiveness. Yet academic developers rarely work directly with

students. In working with academics to achieve strategic change in teaching and learning, academic developers are always at one stage removed from the effects of their actions on students. Workshops, conversations, courses and interventions carried out by academic developers may demonstrably affect changes in academics' thinking, but the effectiveness of their actions in terms of changes in student learning is reliant on the extent to which others make changes in their practice. It is up to academics to decide to change. So academics mediate the effectiveness of academic development.

Another example, in which the values base of academic development is undermined, often with the acquiescence of developers, has been the implementation of the same strategies for evaluating courses in teaching and learning as for other courses. In this way, academics are treated as if they are students rather than professional colleagues. This, together with requirements to assess academics' work in such courses, subverts the integrity of the relationship of academic developers and their professional colleagues, changing the dynamic of the relationship and undermining the value base of academic development practice.

The value base of academic development is critical to its success. Faculty academics with whom developers work do a different kind of job from developers, so sensitivity to their needs and interests is critical if developers are to carry any authority to effect change. However, it is perhaps curious that evaluation of effectiveness in terms of improved capacity of academics to change, increased pedagogical skills and so on, is of less interest to managers than that these changes have resulted in improvements in students' learning and experiences. In contrast, commercial organisations have long recognised that the skills, well-being and opportunities for personal growth and fulfilment of their employees are vitally important to the productivity of the company; a lesson that universities appear slow to come to terms with. Student progress and well-being are dependent on the skills and well-being of university employees. A focus on student experiences and outcomes at the expense of investment in academics' training and development is not wise, and it creates a difficult terrain for academic developers to tread.

The present day effectiveness of academic development is dependent not only on what they do today, but on the history of the particular institution and centre. I was recently at an event where some senior academics were arguing that academic development workshops were useless. They were talking of the one-off workshops that they had attended some fifteen or twenty years earlier. Myths of academic development practice held by the academic community and specifically by academic managers influence the extent to which academic development practices are taken up and taken seriously, and their capacity to effect change in organisations. A recent study shows that there are some institutional differences in the extent to which people take up opportunities for development. Academic developers have limited opportunities to shift historically grounded myths and cultures, yet the effectiveness of present-day practice is affected by this.

It is pertinent to ask why evaluation has become particularly important at the present time. With the increased emphasis on performance management, centres and individuals have not just to be effective, but to be seen to be effective. What constitutes evidence of effectiveness changes over time as new senior personnel wish to make a mark. We have seen in a number of universities over recent years, the destruction of long-standing academic development centres as new managers take over and want to change institutional strategies and make their mark on teaching and learning. Restructuring an academic development centre is an easy way to demonstrate change and this can readily be effected by questioning previous evaluation strategies and data on effectiveness. A centre, which one year is held up as an exemplar of how change can happen in a department, which has programmes considered world leading, can change overnight when a new regime demands different kinds of evidence. Underlying many of the discussions in this book is the knowledge that change can happen almost in an instant. Developing a nuanced understanding of the role of evaluation in the politics of institutions is a key task facing academic developers. It is a strategy to minimize the risks of catastrophic change. This book, in providing a range of different theoretical perspectives and examples of practice, highlights the challenges, the complexity and the importance of this.

So what does the future hold? Will academic development ever be other than a troubled profession? The growth in academic development centres within faculties signals an important trend. It gives expression to the view that development of teaching and learning in a specific disciplinary context is best carried out by specialists in that discipline. Yet there will always be a need for cross-disciplinary debate that comes from bringing together academics from across the disciplinary spectrum. So academic development will continue to negotiate difficult terrain. A greater sense of the politics and practices of evaluation is an important addition to the skill set of developers. This is a much-needed and timely book which contributes a great deal to the professional debates within the field of academic development. It is my hope that it will also contribute to a greater understanding of academic managers of the complexities and multi-faceted nature of evaluating this important work.

Angela Brew
Sydney, 2010

Acknowledgments

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Evaluation of Academic Practice

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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Academic Development

An Overview

LORRAINE STEFANI

Introduction

Academic development activities and centres are now commonplace in most universities and higher education institutions, certainly in the UK, Australasia, Canada and South Africa, whereas in the USA there is a long history of faculty development in colleges and universities. Academic development is gaining importance in higher education institutions in every country and every continent. Universities in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China are currently seeking advice on how best to provide academic development opportunities for their staff.

This interest at a global level gives some credence to the assertion that academic development has moved from being a highly marginal practice to a dominant discourse framing the ways university teaching is understood (Clegg and Smith, 2008; Clegg, 2009). On the other hand some would argue that, more than 40 years after its beginnings, academic development still stands uncertainly on the threshold of becoming a profession or discipline in its own right (Grant et al., 2009).

Activities encompassed within the broad field of academic development are many and varied and tend to shift in accordance with national policy developments relating to higher education; the nature and type of higher education institution; changes in institutional priorities; and changes in key personnel at senior management level.

Over the past few years there has been an interesting and not always welcome shift with national/institutional desires for strategic alignment and wider impact of academic development endeavours. Increasingly academic development initiatives are viewed as enabling activities, and developers as acceptable interpreters and framers working with both senior management and frontline academic staff.

Problematic issues for academic development and developers are a lack of coherence in the understood purpose of 'development' and uncertainty of

direction within the community of developers. These issues are compounded by the lack of an agreed framework for evaluation of the impact, added value and effectiveness of academic development (Kreber and Brook, 2001; Rowland, 2002). As universities under pressure from governments and funding bodies become more concerned over measures of accountability and standardization, the field of academic development could potentially become vulnerable to imposed measures of accountability or impact.

Academic development is a highly fragmented 'project' oriented towards change and transformation (Land, 2004) thus rendering the activities encompassed under the broad umbrella term 'development' problematic to evaluate. If programmes of development activities and practices are viewed as interventions intended to effect positive change, meaningful evaluation of these practices needs to be seen in historical and contextual terms.

However, given that learning and teaching and the overall student learning experience at tertiary level are the objects of intensive scrutiny and the ultimate goal of academic development is essentially to change teaching practice to support student engagement and enhance the student learning experience, it is perhaps not surprising that the work of academic development units is also an object of scrutiny.

The academic development community is well aware of the need to develop a culture of evaluation and to develop effective evaluative tools. The genesis of this book is the ongoing dialogue at international conferences, the collaborative projects academic developers are engaged in and many recent journal articles focusing on issues of evaluation and effectiveness. The community of developers has a sense of the urgency to share best practice and out of that to seek effective models and frameworks for evaluation of the impact of the work we do within our institution(s), and for national and international collaborative development projects.

The chapters and case studies which follow will affirm the scope and influence of the academic development project; explore the relationship between academic development and the scholarship of learning and teaching; and propose new approaches and frameworks for evaluation. The book addresses the question of how we can best evaluate and evidence our contribution to strategic educational change, through an exploration of practitioners' views and understandings of the *notion* of impact or effectiveness, given the complexity of the environments within which academic development and developers operate.

The Scope of Academic Development

Despite the uncertainties that still exist over whether or not academic development meets the criteria to be defined as a profession in its own right, there can be no doubt that development in higher education is a fast-growing area. As Gordon points out in Chapter 3 of this book 'considerable proliferation has taken place in the range of roles which academics can be asked to perform'. This applies equally

within the field of academic development. Clegg (2009) suggests that 'academic development is a primary site through which the "subject" of teaching and learning in higher education has come about' (p. 403). It seems timely therefore to engage in an exploration of how academic development interventions are currently evaluated and to further enhance the status of academic development through seeking tangible and transferable frameworks for evaluation of our work.

Given the broad scope of academic development and the diversity of the academic development community, this book is intended to appeal to a wide audience. Some of the ideas expressed are challenging and even controversial, which is all to the good in terms of stimulating further debate. For those interested in entering the field, this book will provide important insights into the different orientations of academic developers, the tensions inherent in academic development practice and the complexities of evaluation of that practice.

Structure and Outline of Chapters and Case Studies

There are three sections in this book. The chapters in Section I focus on defining and contextualizing academic development practice. They set the scene around the complexities of evaluation of that practice. Section II provides a range of examples of evaluation of current practice. This section comprises a series of eight case studies drawn from current practice at the University of Auckland (UoA), New Zealand. The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) at the University of Auckland is one of the largest centres of its type in Australasia. Benchmarking activities indicate that the types of programmes and academic development initiatives offered are similar to those in most higher education institutions internationally and, owing to its size, the work of CAD encompasses a very broad range of development activities and interventions. One of the case studies, focusing on leadership programmes, is written by a collaborative colleague, the Director of the Staff and Organisational Development Unit based within Human Resources at the University of Auckland. The chapters in Section III are primarily concerned with evaluation of large-scale projects at faculty, institutional and national level. The penultimate chapter in this section provides a salutary message about the language we use around evaluation. Terms such as 'impact' and 'effective', for example, are loaded terms that can be interpreted in different ways depending on context. The message is that the language of evaluation may be as important as evaluative practice itself. The final chapter summarizes the future potential for evaluation of the effectiveness of academic development.

Setting the Scene for Evaluation

In Chapter 2, Shelda Debowski maps out the context for and the scope of academic development highlighting the challenges in forming 'a comprehensive

approach to evaluating the impact and outcomes of the extensive range of activities carried out by academic developers.'

Although the changing roles and responsibilities of academic development units have been the subject of extensive research (e.g. Gosling, 2007; Harland and Staniforth, 2008; Clegg, 2009), Debowski, in her chapter, discusses a subtle but important shift in the status of academic development and developers through the expansion of executive appointments in many universities to include the role of Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching. On the one hand, this reflects the elevated status of learning and teaching, now part of the international policy agenda in higher education as universities compete for students in what is now a global industry. On the other hand, the role of Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching generally includes strategy and policy formation; consequently the focus for academic developers, particularly Academic Development Directors, may have shifted to implementation of these policies rather than acting as influential agents for learning and teaching policy and change across the senior leadership community.

Debowski states that the 'focus of academic development is to influence and transform academic practice and communities and that the measurement of how these agencies encourage reformed practice needs to be carefully considered.' She presents a potential model for documenting and evaluating both inputs and outputs, taking into consideration the different levels at which academic development operates, including individual/group learning, influencing and culture setting, and institutional organization and transformation.

A further important matter highlighted in this chapter is the evaluation of the management of the academic development unit as a service agency in the university community, a subject well worthy of further research. Debowski offers a model which she believes has the potential to support a cohesive analysis of the overall functioning of academic development units.

In Chapter 3, George Gordon questions where academic development sits within the spectrum of quality assurance and quality enhancement. Gordon explores the question in relation to aligning academic development work with the bottom line of externally led quality/assurance/enhancement agendas – which is the quality of the student experience. Although Gordon acknowledges that this idea may be contested or even contentious, he outlines and then expands upon the long list of significant changes in higher education in recent times, all of which impact on the quality agenda and which in turn have the potential to influence the definition and direction of academic development.

Like Debowski in Chapter 2, George Gordon sets out the scope of academic development. There are similarities, differences and overlaps between the meanings and definitions of academic development work, highlighting again the complexities of the project and the difficulties in setting out a framework for evaluation of effectiveness.

In common with other contributors to this book, Gordon points to the many agencies, professional bodies and individuals involved in promoting the enhancement of academic practice. He suggests that with the sheer scale of activities taking place at any given time, the academic development activities being reported on may be only the tip of the iceberg. He calls for the development of visual tools or models to promote a shared understanding of interconnections, structures and relationships to guide reflection on and evaluation of the academic development enterprise.

Gordon also points to the important work of Land (2004) in outlining the range of different orientations to academic development and suggests that 'where academic development sits in relation to quality agendas will be coloured by the orientations of the various players and their experiences, preferences, aspirations and values.' This comes close to suggesting that Land's work (2004) on discourse, identity and practice as related to academic developers and development could provide a useful tool for aligning academic developers with particular aspects and facets of the development project.

In his concluding remarks Gordon suggests that academic developers and development perhaps need to change with the times. Our agenda needs to be transformative as opposed to compliant. This necessitates more risk taking and of course recognizing that transformation is not easily amenable to simple evaluation.

In a thought-provoking, conceptual chapter, Carolin Kreber poses the question 'how might we demonstrate the "fitness for purpose" of our academic development work?' (Chapter 4). Her backdrop for this questioning is, in common with other chapter authors, the often conflicting agendas and expectations of the development project. Drawing on the extensive literature on the philosophy of learning and teaching, Kreber takes on the challenge of exploring what kind of a practice academic work essentially is, and from this exploration attempts to define academic development itself.

Kreber puts enhancement of the student learning experience to the forefront in her treatise on the meaning and purpose of learning and teaching at university level. Whereas Debowski and Gordon essentially map out the scope of academic development in the previous two chapters, Kreber picks up on the idea of the bottom line of accountability being the quality of the student learning experience. She interrogates what it means to teach such that students will have a quality learning experience and what that then implies for the practice of academic development.

Kreber deplores the often simplistic responses to the UK-wide National Student Survey outcomes. She takes issue with knee-jerk reactions to low survey scores – one response being that academic developers need to provide academics with hints and tips to improve some aspects of teaching; the idea behind such a response being that this will improve the scores next time around! Such responses

add weight to Kerri-Lee Krause's view, expressed in Chapter 5, that institutions do not interrogate survey outcomes in a scholarly manner with the intention of enhancing the student experience.

Kreber's in-depth exploration of the purpose or goals of teaching and teaching practice at higher education levels takes us to the heart of what academic practice and development should be about. We are taken on a journey that reaches the conclusion that 'if universities are to achieve the goal of emancipating learners, setting them free through their learning so that they can use their critical capacities, apply and invest themselves and thereby begin to address the problems confronting humanity' – then evaluation of academic development should focus on the 'processes' by which we enable, support and inspire academics to take a courageous and authentic approach to teaching.

Whereas Carolin Kreber suggests evaluation of academic development should focus on the processes by which we support academic staff in their role as facilitators of student learning, in Chapter 5 Kerri-Lee Krause advocates an evidence-based approach to evaluation. In a view not dissimilar to that expressed by Gordon in Chapter 3, Krause advises academic developers to make their mark by developing an evidence-based agenda. In her chapter Krause discusses the benefits of using student survey data to shape academic development priorities and approaches.

Although academic development units are constructed in different ways in different universities and have varying remits, in essence there is a shared understanding amongst developers that we are engaged in a project to improve the quality and status of university teaching and to improve the student learning experience (Stefani and Elton, 2002; Prebble et al., 2004; Buckridge, 2008).

Krause emphasizes the importance of addressing the questions of relevance, purpose and effectiveness of academic development in a climate of reduced government funding and increased scrutiny of all aspects of academic practice. She believes that one purposeful means of showing relevance is to engage with and respond to student survey data, using it to 'inform academic development strategic and operational plans, policy development, targeted workshop programs and discipline-based professional development.'

Krause provides extensive information on types and purposes of student learning experience data that are now available to us, from the suite of surveys encompassed within the Cooperative Institutional Research Program in the United States; through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) used in the United States and Canada; the Course Experience Questionnaire and the First Year Experience Questionnaire both developed and administered in Australian higher education institutions; the National Student Survey in the UK; and a recent instrument, the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE). The point Krause is making is that the rapid emergence of a number of influential survey tools aligns clearly with the increased focus on institutional accountability, quality assurance and performance-based funding arrangements.

But Krause sees this intensive survey activity as an opportunity for academic

developers to bridge the data gap by using the information collected by means of student surveys to work in partnership with stakeholders across the institution, interpreting and using the data to effect culture change and enhance practice. She provides a model that places an emphasis on 'academic development activities that are sensitive and responsive to institutional structures, processes and cultures', and argues that academic development approaches that are underpinned by strategic use of student data could enable better alignment between the experience of staff and students, the institutional values and culture, policies, practice and resourcing.

Such an approach would undoubtedly be helpful in aligning evaluation of academic development work with strategic endeavours to enhance the student experience. In the latter part of Chapter 5, Krause conveys the importance of academic developers and other key stakeholders having the skills to interpret student data. She suggests this is often a barrier to effective use of the rich data being gathered.

In the final chapter in this section (Chapter 6) Cathy Gunn provides an insightful analysis of the 'challenges facing academic developers in the influential but unpredictable area of digital technologies in tertiary education', and a conceptual overview of the changing terrain of learning and teaching as a result of technological advances. With clear links to the earlier case study on elearning (Case Study 6), Gunn questions and provides a response to the question 'what is it that is being evaluated?'

In common with Kerri-Lee Krause in the previous chapter, Gunn is clear that evaluation at any stage of implementing innovative strategies must be first and foremost evidence-based. She eschews the notion that we should evaluate the impact of specific activities either by isolating them from other activities or by comparing them with others. She argues that such techniques may work well in some areas of study but do not fit the different paradigm of development. Instead she argues for the ongoing development of 'qualitative, interpretive and critical methods of evaluation fine tuned to the study of learning in naturalistic settings.'

There are also interesting parallels between Gunn's viewpoint on evaluating the processes by which we build elearning capacity within an institution and Kreber's view (Chapter 4) that we should evaluate the processes by which we as developers support teachers to achieve the goals of higher education teaching.

Although the focus of Gunn's chapter is on academic development relating to elearning and effective embedding of technology in learning and teaching, the design-based research approach that she suggests is the best approach to evaluating the impact of such work could well be applied to many more aspects of academic development.

Case Studies of Evaluative Practice

Section II showcases academic development practice and approaches to evaluation of the effectiveness of that work, in a large, top one-hundred,

research-intensive institution with eight faculties, a diverse population of students and one of the largest academic development centres in Australasia.

The purpose of the case studies is primarily to show approaches taken to evaluating the effectiveness of a range of academic development inputs with different facilitative strategies and different goals. There are two strands to the overarching objectives of the inputs, one being to enhance learning and teaching and the student experience and the other to effect organizational change and development. These two strands resonate well with the purpose of academic development as articulated by the authors of the chapters in Section I. Overall the case studies give a sense of the range of activities that fall within the remit of academic development. There will be similarities and differences between different institutions depending on the nature of any particular higher education institution, the socio-political environment, the size of the institution and the mission. What becomes apparent from this series of case studies is the absence of an overarching evaluative framework for the academic development enterprise.

However, many of the key themes that can be drawn from the chapters in the previous section can be glimpsed through the case studies, for example taking a longer (historical) perspective on evaluation, examining the processes by which we endeavour to enhance learning and teaching and the student experience, the multi-agency nature of academic development and providing the evidence base for our activities. Taking these together with the themes from Section III, it becomes possible to see ways forward to develop more robust and compelling ways of providing evidence of the effectiveness of academic development.

Overall the case studies highlight a number of important points. In the institution showcased here, three of the case studies focus specifically on different aspects of building research capacity and capability. This is not too surprising given the nature of the institution. Different types of institution will encourage different sorts of academic development input, hence making it difficult to suggest common frameworks for evaluation. Other issues explored include the unpredictability of academics' immediate responses to academic development inputs. A prime example here relates to academics' views on the institutional Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice programme described by Helen Sword (Case Study 5). Evaluations carried out during or immediately after engagement with such programmes may differ markedly from views expressed at a different point in time – which resonates well with the notion that meaningful evaluation of interventions intended to effect positive change needs to be seen in both historical and contextual terms (Land, 2004).

The case studies show little in the way of generic workshops. In common with many similar academic development units or centres, the staff within the CAD at the University of Auckland recognize the limitations of generic workshops. Anecdotal evidence from faculty indicates a preference for contextualized development opportunities or defined development programmes. The cases

here tend to relate to institutional strategic priorities actioned through specific interventions such as the institution-wide Doctoral Skills Programme described by Kelly et al. (Case Study 3), mandatory supervision training as discussed by Barbara Grant (Case Study 4) or high-level activities such as facilitation of departmental strategic development events (Stefani; Case Study 7). The outcomes of such interventions or activities are not amenable to immediate simplistic evaluations, nor is it easy to predetermine the tangible outcomes of such work.

Most institutions have an interest in building elearning capacity and the University of Auckland is no exception. As Gunn and Donald show in Case Study 6, the evaluation of academic development relating to elearning capacity building poses a number of challenges. Once again the question can be asked, 'what is it that is being evaluated?' Is it enhanced student learning outcomes? Is it the expertise of those enabling capacity building or is it the iterative processes involved in developing online resources intended to engage the learners?

The first case study of the series (Case Study 1), written by Matiu Ratima, gives an indication of one institution's response to the importance of culturally relevant academic development, whereas the last case study, by Linda McLain (Case Study 8), focuses on leadership development within the institution. These two cases in particular show the need for multi-agency input to organizational change and development, which adds further layers of complexity to the 'who, what, why, where and when?' issues associated with evaluation of effectiveness. They also link well with the ideas expressed in George Gordon's chapter in which he suggests we need some form of visualization of the connections and relationships between different academic development inputs to support shared understandings of the development project and to provide a tool or a model to inform reflections and guide evaluations (Chapter 3).

In Matiu Ratima's case, it is clear that the institution has some way to go to fully live up to the principles outlined in the Treaty of Waitangi (Case Study 1) but the Centre for Academic Development is making strenuous attempts to promote and support excellence in teaching and learning for Māori staff and students.

Barbara Kensington-Miller describes well the strategies she uses to set up peer mentoring pairs with early-career academics. She also presents the ways in which she is currently attempting to evaluate this work. However, as with many interventions of this nature, it will be immensely difficult to determine or even suggest a causal link between the developmental inputs and the future attainment of the peer mentoring participants. Providing peer mentoring is an institutional strategic priority, to support staff in all aspects of their academic career, but it may well require longitudinal studies to determine the impact.

Barbara Grant, in her case study on academic development activities intended to improve or enhance supervision skills, describes her evaluation practice as 'bricolage' (Case Study 4), a term often used to refer to the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things which happen to be available.