

Background. This framework was the outcome of an exercise in which all 34 departments at the University of Exeter were scrutinised for their transferable skill provision¹. At this time (1994-5), typical skills lists rarely contained perceptions of those expected to deliver the curriculum; academics considered them inflexible and as promoting inappropriate jargon. Since evidence on institutional innovation indicated that curriculum and pedagogical change is more likely to be effective if a 'bottom up' approach promotes ownership of initiatives and vocabulary, the framework presented here reflects the skill descriptions and terminology of academic staff teaching skills-based courses.

There are, however, many obvious similarities with skills descriptors within, say, the national framework for key skills² or typical lists of employer demands³. The validity of the framework has now been tested with academics and students in other institutions, and with young employees and human resource developers in major international companies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs)⁴. It has also been updated through an ongoing exercise to map personal and key skills across the institution, and reflects more recent initiatives in HE such as 'employability' and 'personal development planning'.

Conceptualisation. The description of existing practices was translated into a tool to promote development and change in curriculum design. The purpose is twofold: firstly strengthening learning within HE - such skills are fundamental to, and underpin, academic study; secondly providing learners with skills for job-recruitment, the workplace and lifelong learning.

The resulting framework consists of four broad areas of management skills - of self, others, information and task. These skills are generic in that they can potentially be applied to any discipline or programme of study, to the workplace or indeed to any other context; and to vocational and non-vocational, traditional and innovative provision. The inner core of the framework contains prompts for curriculum design: concepts recognised within research data and theoretical approaches to learning and teaching as central to effective growth: promoting Learning Strategies; Assessment; Evaluation; and Transfer.

The explicit focus on 'personal management' is central, emphasising the importance of 'managing oneself', 'taking responsibility for self' on the journey towards self-regulated and independent learning. The framework is predicated on a curriculum that is embodied within substantive subject knowledge; syntactic skills (what it means to be an 'engineer', an 'historian'...); knowledge of ways of working and the processes of learning; and the complex inter-relationships between these areas. Within this conceptualisation, there is a requirement for students to be active in the construction of knowledge in their discipline and about themselves; to become aware of themselves as learners; and to be active managers and evaluators of their own progress and personal growth.

Using the framework as a tool for curriculum design. The sets of skills included within each of the quadrants are intended to serve as flexible examples of learning outcomes to be amended or adapted for different purposes and activities. The design is specifically intended to invite intellectual engagement through examination of

the relationship between the quadrants, in a way that cannot be offered by conventional lists. It is this relationship between the quadrants, and between the core, the management areas and the sets of skills that should frame any planning exercise.

There is no delineation of levels in relation to skills, but the model is premised on students increasingly taking control over their own learning, developing independence and autonomy in decision-making in increasingly complex environments, with decreasing teacher support. The development of appropriate learning behaviours in students will be promoted and achieved through the specific and explicit methods used by the teacher, and/or through the provision of particular contexts or environments for learning.

In curriculum planning, questions on pedagogy emanating from the core prompts could include: What *strategies* for learning can I help students acquire, use or develop further? In what ways will I ensure that these support disciplinary study? What can my selected forms of *assessment* tell students about the processes of learning or required skills? How can I enable students to *evaluate* themselves, the materials they are using, the task? How can I support recognition of the need for mindful *transfer* of skills to new subject content or new contexts? How am I, as a teacher, explicitly ensuring that the learning environment provided effectively engages students in these processes of personal management?

¹ Dunne, E. (1995) '*Personal Transferable Skills*', report to Teaching Committee, University of Exeter.

² QCA Key Skills, www.qca.org.uk.

³ eg Quality in HE (1994) *Update*, University of Central England.

⁴ Bennett, N., Dunne, E., and Carre, C. (2000) *Skills Development in Higher Education and Employment*, SRHE/ Open University Press, Buckingham.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

The core of this framework presents areas considered central to the promotion of effective learning experiences. The quadrants of the framework outline skills in key areas of personal development: management of self, of others, of the task and of information. The skills lists provided here do not preclude attention to more conventional lists including, for example, 'communication', 'problem-solving', 'independent learning', 'team/ group work', etc, but may be used in conjunction with them. It is intended that skills should be selected and combined from across the management quadrants according to context, purposes and required emphases. These lists serve as a starting point that may be supplemented and adjusted.

