

Developing Early to Mid-career Academic Staff in a Changing University Environment.

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Abstract

New academic staff are generally offered structured career development opportunities particularly to develop their teaching practice, often in the form of a credit-bearing programme. Less purposeful development is typically offered beyond this stage, despite staff often moving in to key leadership roles to enhance learning and teaching practice, such as programme leadership, project management and mentoring of new staff. This article presents data from a world café event run for graduates of a post-graduate certificate who were up to 10 years into their career, where they engaged in conversations about the affordances and obstacles to their career development. Three key themes emerged from the findings. Firstly, purposeful networking and engaging in communities of practice were significant vehicles for examining career options, developing leadership capacity and becoming more visible in the university. Secondly, taking the time to make decisive and purposeful choices in career development opportunities was noted by participants. Thirdly, finding strategies to manage conflict and change were often voiced; whilst staff were prepared for teaching roles, managing conflicting demands was often challenging, and development in leadership in changing times was less purposeful. Suggestions are presented for universities to consider to more purposefully develop early to mid-career staff, particularly in a time of rapid change.

Keywords: professional development, lecturer, career development, world café, community of practice, leadership, change management.

1. Introduction.

There is typically considerable opportunity for new academic staff to be supported as they start engaging in teaching and establishing themselves in research. In the UK where this article is situated, Higher Education Academy accredited post-graduate certificates based on developing teaching practice are available in most universities, and are often a probationary

requirement for new academic staff. However, after these initial stages structured professional development is less common. As noted by Baldwin, DeZure, Shaw & Moretto (2008), discussing post-tenure American teaching staff (i.e. approximately six years teaching experience):

“mid-career faculty are off the radar screen. The theory is that the ball will bounce by itself and have momentum” (p.46),

and robust research on the most appropriate methods of development is scarce (Baldwin et al., 2008).

Mid-career staff however are vital to keeping universities running (Uldam & Das, 2011). They are generally becoming established in teaching and building their research profiles, but could also be engaging in programme development and leadership, leading or having significant roles in research groups, sitting on boards and task groups, engaging in other project management and external examiner roles, and mentoring of new staff. How they engage with these roles, whether willingly or not are critical to the running of university processes.

In addition, the nature of academic work is changing; technology is having a greater impact on our work, and sector drivers are shaping the direction of universities. Purposeful on-going career development is therefore worthwhile for individuals, and purposeful succession planning useful for universities themselves.

This article will present a case study of an approach taken at the authors' university to engage early to mid-career academic staff in professional development. It will:

- provide a context for the research from a review of the literature and outline the challenges academic staff are currently facing
- briefly present the format for a one-time developmental event, and provide a framework which academic developers and senior academic staff may wish to adapt
- discuss the ideas generated by the participants at the event
- suggest a framework for developing early to mid-career teaching staff.

The article is focused on staff who have been teaching up to 10 years including concurrent study for a post-graduate certificate. Comparison with other studies is challenging as pathways to attaining an academic post vary considerably internationally, and there is no

universally accepted understanding of the stages of career development, and the boundary between early and mid-career. Finkelstein, Seal & Schuster (1998) use seven years as the differentiation between new and established staff; the participant group spans that boundary. For the purposes of this article, we have therefore used the term 'early to mid-career', and where cited, have focused on studies of teaching experience within this time period.

1.1. Scholarship informing our approach.

1.1.1 The changing nature of academic life.

Several changes to academic life are happening concurrently. The power relationship between staff and students is changing. Students are paying more for their education and so are becoming more outspoken about their expectations. They are also gaining greater access to decision making processes within universities. At the same time, the graduate market has altered considerably. Graduates face a future of several careers, and there is increasing expectation on universities to prepare students for this uncertainty, with increased demands on academic staff and expectations of a different skills set. These changing expectations are mirrored in other professional groups and it would be useful to consider these in terms of Eraut's (1994) work on the changing nature of professionalism, as this has inevitably raised the level of uncertainty in academic teachers' career planning and heightened the need for alternative ways of thinking about an academic career. Eraut (1994) argues that professionalism is a process by which occupational groups gain and maintain status and the associated benefits of that status. According to Eraut (1994) it is grounded in three aspects: specialist professional knowledge, professional autonomy, and the idea of service to clients. All of these have been undermined to a greater or lesser extent, as universities have changed over recent years, and have a bearing on career decisions.

1.1.2 Professionalism as specialist knowledge.

Professionals have mastered particular and specialist knowledge and skills to enable them to operate and are expected to remain current in an often-changing environment (Roberts and Donahue, 2000). They are providing expertise that is inaccessible to the client (Eraut, 1994). In the university sector, discipline knowledge forms a large part of this; academic staff are seen as experts in the field of study, and traditionally also the decision maker in terms of

the scope of the discipline delivery. Students, employers and society have traditionally had little say over course content except for programmes of study that are professionally accredited. However, in this instance, academic staff would largely be seen as an extension of the professional body itself. This has increasingly changed as students take a more active role in programme development through increased and empowered student representation, inclusion in university panels engaged in review, and thematic working groups such as in the development of a personal tutoring policy.

Employers, governments and society are also driving change. Most current graduates will have several careers, and many will be working in roles not yet created (Jackson, 2011) resulting in universities continually refreshing their portfolio of programmes. This also means that universities of the future will need to prepare students for considerable uncertainty, and students' capacity for agency becomes even more critical (Jackson, 2011).

The proliferation of the internet has afforded increased access to knowledge and has also had an impact on its ownership. There is a difference however between *propositional knowledge*, the background knowledge that one needs to understand before action can take place, and *practical know-how or functioning knowledge* (Eraut, 1994; Biggs, 2003), the "knowing *how* to do things ... [and] knowing *when* to do things and *why* [emphasis added]" (Biggs, 2003, p.42). Additional information sources such as the internet therefore can provide and complement propositional knowledge, but the expertise the academic can still claim is helping students learn to apply propositional knowledge to practical situations; determining the most relevant propositional knowledge to present to students and the best way to present it; and determining ways students might practise this knowledge to develop the practical know-how expected of the discipline.

Academic staff therefore have discipline literacy that their clients do not generally have, and increasingly, pedagogic expertise to inform best teaching practice, and as Watts (2000) points out, it is both these aspects that denote the academic professional. It also means that academics themselves are clients in propositional knowledge and practical know-how as *teachers* and raises the importance of ongoing staff development.

1.1.3 Professionalism as autonomy.

The second of Eraut's (1994) aspects, professional autonomy, is gained through specialist knowledge; knowledge confers status (Eraut, 1994) and gives professionals the freedom to manage their approach to their work (Roberts and Donahue, 2000). This freedom has however been managed through accepted guidelines set down by the profession itself through codes of conduct (Roberts and Donahue, 2000; Eraut, 1994).

Professional autonomy is shifting however. Internationally there is now greater emphasis on students' perspectives on their own education. In the UK, data is collected from current students regarding their learning experience through the National Student Survey, and employability data is also collected from graduates. This data is widely published and has an impact on universities' student recruitment. This could ultimately challenge the viability of some universities. These external drivers inevitably become internal drivers, and so a perceived managerialist approach to lecturers' work, and for some, a threat to their independence.

1.1.4 Professionalism as service.

Eraut's (1994) third aspect is service. Professionals tend to be committed to their profession and motivated by the needs of their clients rather than self-interest (Eraut, 1994; Roberts and Donahue, 2000). The service to the client is also often greater than the loyalty to the organisation itself; doctors' loyalty is to patient care rather than the needs of the hospital (Roberts and Donahue, 2000). There has also traditionally been considerable trust on the part of the client that the professional is acting in the interests of the client (Eraut, 1994). With the rise in civil rights, society itself has gone through considerable change, and clients no longer approach professionals with the same degree of compliance or reverence. The metaphor of students as consumers however is problematic; it drives the idea of universities as a business, and business models do not promote benevolence to clients (Roberts and Donahue, 2000). The combination of the "quality revolution" (Newton, 2002, p.39) of the last twenty years and the rapid shift towards a higher education 'marketplace' has therefore fundamentally changed the nature of academia and broadened the range of stakeholders that higher education institutions find themselves accountable to: students and their parents, and government, industry and society as a whole have turned their eyes towards the academy with fresh scrutiny.

So the role of the academic is changing and will probably continue to change. At present, there remains a distinct need for the academic professional, however the pace of change might indicate that staff need support to develop an alternative skills set, alternative ways of working, and career management support.

2. Methodology

2.1. The World Café.

The data were generated from a world café (The world café, 2017) staff development event organised on the 10th anniversary of the post-graduate certificate for new academic staff; participants therefore ranged from two to 12 years into their career.

A keynote speaker was invited, and the world café event followed in which all participants had the opportunity to discuss ideas for their own development. World café is an interactive activity in which large groups can be engaged in dialogue. The venue was set up in café style, with round tables and white tablecloths on which notes could be added. Participants began at one of four tables each of which had a topic for discussion. After a given period participants moved on to another table to discuss the next topic.

The four themes were decided prior to the event through a focus group of senior staff, and were broad enough to enable many career developmental challenges or concerns to be raised. Each table was facilitated by a senior staff member with expertise in the theme to be discussed.

The themes were written with the context of the university in mind. They were as follows, with some explanatory notes where appropriate.

1. How do you upscale and embed interventions to be sustainable? The term 'intervention' may not be familiar to readers in this context. It is terminology used within the PgC, and refers to the developmental changes to practice that participants make to complete the PgC using an action research methodology. The purpose of this is to practise a developmental process that they can continue to use in their subsequent years.

2. *How do you integrate a career of learning and teaching, and research?* The university under discussion is on the whole teaching focused. Whilst there are higher grade posts in leadership in teaching, the route to professorship remains biased towards staff with significant research profiles.

3. *How do you build your own leadership capacity?*

4. *How do you effect change whilst reconciling the range of different agendas coming your way (for example employability/ retention/ sustainability)?*

2.2 Research methodology and data collection.

Each of the four themes was discussed for 15 minutes and all comments generated were noted on the tablecloth covering the table. The table host briefly summarised the themes generated thus far when the new group arrived at the table. The tablecloths therefore had the culmination of four groups' thoughts noted. They were collected after the event and form the basis of much of the discussion in this article.

Focus groups, which this method of data collection can be best described as, have been identified as having distinct benefits for data collection over other methods such as interviews and surveys. Firstly, the data is generated by the interaction within the group and so is collective rather than individual (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison, 2007; Robson, 2002), and as such is a social construction (Stewart et al., 2007). This has advantages in that contributions from one member can generate other ideas from others and they can encourage less confident participants to engage (Robson, 2002). The group itself also helps to steer the conversation, so there is less likelihood to go off topic, and extreme views are given less emphasis and time (Robson, 2002). Focus groups also tend to favour the opinions of the participant group rather than the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). It is however, difficult to isolate the respective concerns of individuals and gain generalisable data (Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). Focus groups can also result in groupthink particularly if the group is very similar in outlook (Robson, 2002).

2.3 Data analysis.

The data generated was social constructivist in nature and it was evident that many ideas and themes identified by the participants generated a plethora of thought from others in the group and subsequent groups. It was also evident that there were outlying opinions that might have represented a lone voice or a small group of participants.

Analysis of focus group data starts during the focus group itself due to the moderating influence of the facilitator (Stewart et al., 2007). This was amplified in this situation as data was written down and participants moved from table to table commenting on data already generated..

Further qualitative analysis was undertaken however using parameters such as content analysis, the absence or presence of comments, and the amount and strength of emotion within the comments. All data was examined iteratively and colour-coded with themes that emerged through this examination. These were then coded with statements derived from the data itself or from relevant literature (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). All quotes in the findings unless attributed to other sources are taken from the participant data.

3. Findings.

Three themes emerged strongly from the data collected and will be discussed here. They are:

- The importance of communities of practice in career development
- Making purposeful choices in career development
- Resilience in career development.

3.1 Communities of practice in career development.

The first major theme drawn out from the data analysis was the significance of communities of practice in assisting participants to negotiate their career trajectory. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) conceptualise a community of practice as a social learning environment, where new members are inducted into a culture (workplace or otherwise) through legitimate peripheral participation in a socially situated activity over a period of time, with the result that the participant moves from novice to master in the relevant field. While Wenger's work has

come to underpin constructivist approaches to group learning and professionalisation, the term 'community of practice' has, in the context of higher education, come to be reinterpreted in the literature (and indeed practice) as a broader group learning narrative or cross-discipline collaborative and collegial learning space more in line with a broader learning community (Cox, 2005). Petrone and Ortquist-Ahrens (2011) suggest that learning communities can enhance and even transform learning and teaching. However, Cox (2005) tracks a distinct shift in Wenger's conceptualisation of a community of practice from an organic process of familiarisation to a more purposeful managerialist tool that has the potential to be "new insidious form of control" (p.536) when communities of practice are deliberately formed to advance strategic objectives.

The need for collaborative approaches in the sector was evident in the data: opportunities to "*facilitate something*", for "*networking*" and actively "*facilitat[ing] relationships*" were seen as key to marking a mark in one's career, and for developing leadership capacity. Likewise, the importance of shelter and space to have conversations was identified as a key prerequisite to effecting change, both within the organisation and externally in the wider sector, an idea supported by Brown and Duguid (1991) who argue that communities of practice are "significant sites of innovating" (p.2). In a sector that has experienced a rapid shift in identity in the last twenty or so years, and where the demand for change itself has outstripped the pace of development in the supporting structures and frameworks, Mcinnis (2000) observes:

"The pressure to change and innovate is no longer confined to a minority of early adopters and enthusiasts. The bulk of mainstream academics are now seriously engaged in revising their approaches, although it appears that many are doing so with minimal levels of professional development from their universities" (p.150).

Academia as a vocation is unique; its members are in effect 'trained' in one area (the discipline) only to perform in another (teaching). The data suggested it was discussions around aspects of teaching that often brought people together in learning communities: staff connected with peers outside of their discipline field who shared the same values and ethos in developing teaching, and to share knowledge and expertise around aspects of teaching such as e-learning and problem-based learning. Participants noted the need to "*find your people*" to appreciate and be appreciated by a wider community of peers, and the importance of "*being listened to*" and "*hearing others*" to receive validation and to develop a sense of belonging. In their research on a group of academics at an Australian university, Ferman (2002) found that the strategies

most useful in developing professional expertise were predominantly collaborative regardless of the length of experience, and Donovan, Fleming and Reaburn (2010) note that:

“[communities of practice] are beneficial for academics in higher education because they provide opportunities for the development of new knowledge in an environment where people are willing to share information, on the basis of mutual trust and respect” (p.242).

Donovan et al. (2010) note that the peer support offered in a community of practice can play a role in identifying and finding solutions to gaps in knowledge and expertise; no doubt, the fact that in academia these communities are likely to operate outside of work teams and line management structures is significant. Mentoring is one system that participants identified as having a key role in their conscious career planning and in their development as a professional. It was apparent too that some participants had established their own mentoring relationships through informal networks. Both were influential in developing skills, managing the continual pressures to develop pedagogically as student profiles change, to receive coaching, and gain ideas for integrating a career of teaching and research. Baldwin and Chang (2006) identify mentoring and networking schemes as tools that institutions can utilise to address the development needs of mid-career academic staff. Carmel and Paul (2015) however warn against an overly structured, institution-wide mentoring scheme, stating:

“this professional relationship will yield better results if it is harnessed rather than forced or coerced” (p. 486),

and Deem (1998) warns against managerialist approaches and their effect on academic autonomy and ‘buy in’ by academics, and suggest development is more likely if nurtured rather than imposed.

3.2 Purposeful choices in career development.

Given the range of career pathways academic staff undertake and the changing nature of the academic professional, is it possible to purposefully plan an academic career? Knight’s research (2006), though focused on enhancement of teaching practice, noted that much of the useful professional learning opportunities are tacit, situated, context driven, community specific, and opportunistic. He describes these as ‘knowings’ rather than knowledge, and notes they are not only cognitive, they are also affective. This could perhaps be expanded to lecturers’ engagement in career planning too.

A conference in Hamburg in 2010 (Uldam & Das, 2011) explored purposeful choices in career planning through a series of speakers and discussion. What was evident was the consistent dilemma across universities worldwide between teaching and research; teaching is often how academics can get a start in a department and establish relationships, but ultimately one's research profile is often the determining factor in an academic career.

Another dilemma identified (Uldam & Das, 2010) was the challenge of negotiating the pathway between following one's passions and building collaborative networks with others with complementary interests, and the very competitive, performance driven metrics that are often applied by universities (also noted by Carmel & Paul, 2015) that also may reduce teachers' autonomy (Eraut, 1994). Furthermore, delegates identified the challenge between purposeful diversification of research interests and finding a niche in the research milieu.

There was considerable data across all four questions asked of alumni regarding the need to make purposeful choices in career development. The first point that we wish to discuss is that of self-reflection and taking time to consider one's own motivations in making career choices. As noted by Baldwin et al. (2008) academic staff new to teaching are often embedded in post graduate programmes for the first year or two, with little structured career planning provided by universities beyond this point. Staff felt they were generally expected to lead this themselves, and the group identified the need for "*reflecting on [one's own] values [and how they influence] behaviours*" and "*work[ing] out what motivates [themselves]*" in an environment where staff have different individual interests and priorities, and universities themselves provide extrinsic demands, some of which may be palatable and some not. Capturing one's "*personal identity*" and improving self-knowledge were identified as key aspects of career planning.

For some alumni interested in developing their teaching and their engagement in teaching related leadership, taking advantage of other frameworks provided shape for planning their future career moves, and ideas for where they could be seeking out purposeful opportunities. In this research, Senior Fellowship of the [UK] Higher Education Academy was mentioned as a potential goal; Senior Fellowship recognises leadership and mentorship of other academic staff.

There was some tension noted however between the perceived merits of engagement in the development of research or teaching, and in the lesser status accorded pedagogic research to discipline based research. Staff identified the need to resolve this tension as part of their own purposeful career decisions. However, this is no easy task; as Bryson's (2004) data indicates, staying steadfast to one's values and preferences may inevitably diminish chances of promotion

depending on criteria favoured by particular universities. Davies and Thomas (2002) note that:

“[w]hilst many academics find teaching aspects of academic work highly rewarding and satisfying and lay great emphasis on their professional obligations to students, it would be misleading to portray teaching as having the same status as research in establishing professional reputation” (p.181).

However, Bryson (2004) concludes in his study, that on the whole, teaching staff have considerable intrinsic satisfaction because of the on-going changing nature of their job.

When asked about leadership, staff noted the importance of deliberately investing time and effort in different roles which might raise their profile, give them more visibility, and ensure they were more indispensable, and that they needed to “*see how roles such as Programme Director [were] stepping stones to leadership*”. This identification of worthwhile roles in terms of career planning extended into other suggestions such as differentiating between aspects of research, which committees were the most useful, and noting that some roles, while less desirable and/or interesting could have worthwhile long-term benefits. It needs to be noted here that, as Bryson (2004) has pointed out, promotion in a post-92 university with its greater focus on teaching, is often on the basis of specific leadership and management responsibilities rather than research output as is customary in pre-92 universities.

At the same time, they noted the need to balance competing demands by turning down some roles and responsibilities. The question most directly related to this: *How do you effect change whilst reconciling the range of different agendas coming your way?* generated the most frustration, tension and anxiety of all the questions asked of participants, and perhaps reflects challenges to academics' autonomy. There was evidence that prioritisation was one of the greatest challenges. Interestingly, the data also suggested that the capacity to prioritise was seen as demonstrating leadership potential.

There was some identification of staff purposefully making the most of less desirable roles and tasks by taking time to reflect on possible and perhaps at first unforeseen outputs such as publication, building other networks, and recognising potential skills development.

There was strong evidence across all four questions that staff needed to “*be strategic*” and have a “*clear vision*” in determining career choices. Time and space for reflection and perhaps conversation with others was raised as important in purposeful career planning. There was little evidence however of where these conversations take place, with whom, or where and in what

format purposeful reflection and planning was encouraged.

Whilst tensions and challenges were evident in the data, there appeared to be less evidence of non-purposeful career planning among participants. Questions such as “Do you set out to be a leader?” were noted in the data, but there was less explicit uncertainty and hesitancy evident than might be expected. This is probably due to the moderating aspects of focus group methods of data collection; participants are perhaps less comfortable revealing inactivity in this respect. Other methods of data collection such as interviews or reflective diary accounts may have provided more data.

3.3 Resilience, power and managing change.

A further theme that emerged from the data was the need for resilience in career progression. The data provided many instances of participants voicing dilemmas they faced as relatively new academic staff. These included for example:

- the dilemma between being steadfast in one’s career direction versus being persuaded or coerced into become involved in activities or projects which do not achieve specific career goals,
- initiating and leading a project, and then having to face others’ reinterpretation of it over time and taking it in another direction,
- finding a balance between control and persuasion in leadership roles,
- the potential risks (e.g. to students’ grades) associated with innovative practices versus the drive to make a mark by being a creative teacher,
- managing conflicting agendas.

All of these highlighted internal conflicts participants faced, and the notion of resilience was raised many times. The literature around resilience in the professions is relatively immature, and to date has been particularly focused on the helping professions such as social work and nursing (e.g. Beddoe, Davys & Adamson, 2013; Grant & Kinman, 2013). It is evident that resilience is not innate and can be developed through selective learning opportunities (Grant & Kinman, 2013; Beddoe et al., 2013) and, in particular, through developing reflective ability, emotional intelligence (or literacy), social skills, and social networks (Grant & Kinman, 2013). There was some evidence of these particular attributes being discussed in the data, e.g.

participants "*recognising opportunities*" and "*finding appropriate pathways*" indicate participants have been purposefully reflecting on their career pathways.

Many participants were involved in leading change through their respective roles, and so relationships with other staff, persuasion and persistence came up frequently. Many encountered resistance: "[ideas] *need to be received by people open to change*", and challenges to long term embedding of ideas into on-going practice. The slowness of change and the need for allowing time for ideas to percolate and coalesce was voiced, and some discussion of solutions was indicated by the data, e.g. "*share tacit knowledge ... once people see it as normal, then it is sustainable*".

Change management was often presented as an area participants felt ill prepared for. Some reported designing new and innovative ways to teach which, after introduction across their programme team, became reinterpreted and moved in another direction. It "*can be hijacked [and you need to] let go of the baby*". While some found this difficult, others acknowledged this was also a very positive outcome, to "*expect things to grow and change*" and that this indicated engagement and ownership by the team. What is evident from the data is that change management was learnt through trial and error, and participants did not appear to be using any recognised models of change management as guidance.

There was also acknowledgment that some resistance is due to others being ill prepared for new innovations because of skills gaps, and change management also required identifying these gaps and providing appropriate learning opportunities. Participants indicated the need for always looking ahead and pre-empting potential obstacles to change and being flexible enough to take another direction if necessary. For some pedagogic innovations such as introducing problem-based learning, it was acknowledged that the change process takes considerable time to fully embed across a whole programme team.

The need for resilience in the current higher education environment was evident throughout the data. Participants identified the range of conflicting agendas they were exposed to, and the constant decision making regarding drivers they needed or wanted to respond to, and those that could be given less attention. They identified the need to "*develop their own identity*", to "*reflect on their own values*" and to try to maintain "*authenticity*" in their beliefs, values and practice. This might require defence of their own choices and beliefs within an environment with many pressure points. They also acknowledged the need to purposefully manage themselves in an environment where some felt "*overwhelmed*", and "*threaten[ed by change]*".

4. Conclusion.

It is evident from the data that participants have experienced a range of successes and challenges in their post-PgC career, and this is amplified by the changing nature of the academic professional, which is mirrored in other professions. Successes appear to be largely through persistence, network building and making the right connections, and purposeful reflection on where to focus to enhance their career. There is also evidence of some participants struggling to plan their career, perhaps because of a lack of purposeful opportunity to do so, and some feeling overwhelmed by the challenges ahead. Feedback on the event indicated staff welcomed the opportunity for this type of event.

It also appeared from the data that there was no specific and universal time and space for professional development of early to mid-career staff beyond a compulsory teaching certificate, and greater value needs to be placed on this at an institutional level. Some participants evidently made this time for themselves through purposefully seeking out mentoring and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, but others appeared to less purposefully plan their career, and instead allow external forces to lead their development.

The continually changing environment also posed on-going demands on staff not least because key curriculum development roles which often emerge from these pressures also involved considerable change management skills to implement and take other staff forward with them. Some staff seemed equipped for these roles, others less so. It raises the question: do we as a university favour some aspects of professional development over others, for example, research over teaching, or teaching over curriculum development? It also raises the question: how do we respond to periods of rapid change? Further work is needed to explore these issues.

4.1 Framework for future development.

The three themes emerging strongly from the data have guided our key recommendations for a framework for career development that we propose will assist in supporting early to mid-career academic staff as new interpretations of teachers' professional role are negotiated.

1. Enhancing the opportunities for purposeful choices.

It is recommended that universities:

- a) provide succinct information about career routes for academic and professional staff illustrating possible career paths, and the respective skills required. This would help staff consider: the respective focus of research and teaching; whether to pursue pedagogic research versus discipline research; and the benefits of project leadership versus programme leadership in their careers,
- b) provide opportunities for staff to develop a better understanding of themselves and their strengths and weaknesses to enhance purposeful choices. This could be through regular events, online resources or both,
- c) offer a range of professional development opportunities that map to possible career paths, and where the respective skills developed through these are made explicit.

2. Developing communities of practice.

It is recommended that universities provide opportunities for, and encourage, formal and informal networks and collaborations to enhance career development. This may include:

- a) setting up a formal mentorship scheme,
- b) encouraging discipline based and cross disciplinary collegial relationships,
- c) facilitating work shadowing and other encounters with more senior staff,
- d) facilitating maximum cross university pollination through mixed group workshop encounters or other events.

3. *Building resilience.*

It is also recommended that universities:

- a) provide specific opportunities for on-going skills development, particularly around leadership, change management and mentorship,
- b) monitor continuing staff development needs, particularly in times of rapid change processes, and respond accordingly.

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