Journey with hope

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Learning as a journey is perhaps overused as a metaphor but I intend to exploit it again in this article. The furthest, scariest and most challenging journey I have recently taken was from being a permanent lecturer at Glenrothes College to becoming a contract Researcher at the University of Stirling. This is not because of the move from the college sector to HE or the loss of security in moving from permanent to temporary employment, but rather it was the transition from belonging to a community of practice to one of research. This journey has taken nearly two years, a lot of soul searching and some interesting twists and turns. However bumpy the journey has been it has been exciting and illuminating. Full-time research may not be everybody’s ideas of fun or even a sensible way for a grown-up to earn her living, but after years of scepticism about the value of research, I now wish I had been involved in it more systematically from the outset. I think it would have helped my day-to-day practice. We feel the voices of college sector practitioners must be heard because for too long most of the large-scale research carried out in the sector has been done on Scotland’s colleges by outside bodies: HE or management consultants, rather than with or by the college sector. Dissemination of what we find, the methods we are using and discussions with colleagues across sectors becomes crucial and this article is part of that process. Another way for us to disseminate is through conferences and Roy and I will be attending the SERA conference in Perth on 25-27 September 2004.

In the winter 2004 edition of Broadcast (due out in December) we will describe our journey in more detail.

Footnotes

1. TLRP is a co-ordinated research initiative. Its overarching purpose is to support and develop educational research leading to improvements in outcomes for learners of all ages, in all sectors and contexts of education, training and lifelong learning throughout the UK.

2. You can read more about this project in the spring 2004 edition of Broadcast, pp. 33-35.

3. Danny applied for, and was successful in securing the post of Staff Development Officer at Anniesland College and as a result has left the project. Jim Carmichael has replaced him.